

# MAGAZINE OF ART



STELLA D'ARY FRANGE: COPIES BY CARAVAGGIO'S PUPILS

DOUGLAS MACGARY: CHARLES HOWARD

WILLIAM S. LINDSAY: NOTES ON ROUAULT AS PRINTER

JOHN S. BRIGHT: ART IN THE OLD BYRON AGE

JOHN S. BRIGHT: ARTISTIC EXPERIMENT IN FRANCE (LOYD WRIGHT)

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# MAGAZINE OF ART

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## VINCENT VAN GOGH AND MODERN TIMES

*Frederick S. Wight*

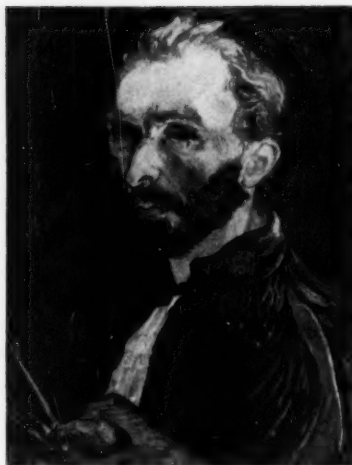
ONE hundred years ago—March 30th, 1853,—Vincent van Gogh was born in the village of Groot-Zundert. Seventy years ago the work for which he is famous had not come into existence. Seven years more and his life was over. We cannot say, "Van Gogh or Cézanne—therefore modern times." The last hundred years is a vast composite. There are different relationships to the future among geniuses; some painfully devise and construct the future, others seem to inhabit the future, already living in future problems and circumstances. Van Gogh's disturbing ambience resembled our own. He is still a modern man.

Van Gogh was a painter who required a subject, and subject matter is now to be taken or left. Yet one can argue that the subject is still there as much as ever. The modern artist has simply become his own subject matter. This was pre-eminently true of van Gogh. His life was inseparable from his art, not because he slashed his ear or because he suffered in his mind. His life cannot be separated from his art because his life was a moral triumph, and because he created a transcript of this triumph in paint. Genius is an intense form of morality materializing itself—van Gogh makes us believe—with its own intense sense of obligation. Van Gogh is the opposite of last century's romantic figure.

To think of his eventually "finding himself" is somehow dated and quaint. Emergence and pace were his exciting and distressing characteristics, as they are ours. Whatever was in him emerged and differentiated itself: his faith, his art, his anxiety. Pace brought him the now familiar challenge of the inescapable: the sense that anything may be concluded in a single lifetime.

If the modern artist is his own subject matter, it is because of his sense of anxiety. This pervasive anxiety was already acute for van Gogh. Intuitively he understood much at a date when anxiety was hardly understood at all. He adjusted himself to it and lived with it; he grew by it. He turned anxiety into a force, and he sensed the need of a moral climate.

Anxiety is a moral symptom. This is still an embarrassing subject, distasteful to those who wish to keep morality out of art. And they are wise if there is not enough art. Morality and art do not combine if the temperature is too low, or if there



Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait*, 1889, 22½ x 17¼", collection John Hay Whitney, New York

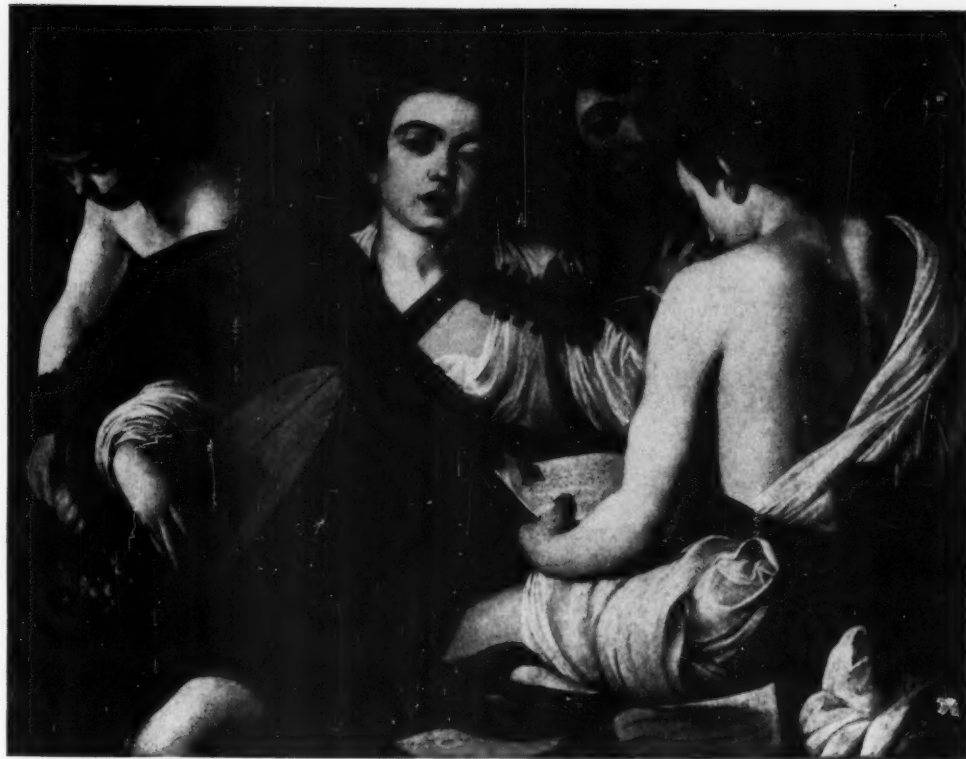
is not enough art so that morality is left over. Van Gogh makes us believe that there are not two sets of values, that there are only two aspects. It takes genius to prove this. Taste prefers anxiety. But van Gogh had a modern conflict on his hands and he was not seduced by taste.

The fusion of morality into art in van Gogh owes much to his family background; from the beginning, he was dedicated both to religion and to art. Alternatives were not possible for him. To succeed he had to be both saint and genius. What a matter for reflection!

The relation of art to religion is difficult to determine, for art boasts that it changes, and religion boasts that it does not. The modern artist has certainly taken over many religious functions, and what was once visibly formal in universal terms is now visibly formal in private terms. The artist is an image maker once more, and his new responsibilities can only show up in symbols. The religious art of van Gogh was bound to lead to abstraction as surely as the architectural art of Cézanne.

There is this about the relation of morality and art. The man of art follows the man of religion. Such was the pattern in van Gogh's own life. Art not only materializes the religious impulse, it individualizes it. It is this latter that is important. The artist cannot help arguing for immortality—the whole struggle of van Gogh's life, with its shifts of emphasis, gradual or sudden, seems to be a search for an acceptable faith. Van Gogh finally understood an immortality shared through recognition, brought down to the surface of the earth and mixed with the dust. He composed in a spiral, symbol of tension, but it is an opening spiral, so that the gyration is never without point or hope. Here is something in which modern times can believe.





## COSTUME IN CARAVAGGIO'S PAINTING

*Stella Mary Pearce*

IN 1590 Cesare Vecellio published the first edition of his profusely illustrated book, *Of Clothes Ancient and Modern*, in Venice. It was not the first book of its kind: Bertelli's had appeared in 1563, and Abraham de Bruyn produced in 1575 a study of cavalry uniforms, followed in 1581 by a work on civilian and military dress; Amman's book on ecclesiastical and secular dress was published in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1586. But Vecellio's is both the most ambitious and the most comprehensive of the four. He includes the contemporary dress of all the countries of Europe, Asia and North Africa, and a brave attempt at a survey of Italian clothes of the past.

It was no accident that the second half of the sixteenth century produced a new branch of scholarship—the study of clothes—for never before had European dress been at the same time so national in character and so familiar outside the countries of origin.

Venice was still—as Giacomo Franco, costume historian, pointed out in 1606—the center of trade, where people of more nationalities in greater numbers could be found than in any of the other three great cities of Italy, Rome, Naples and Milan; though, he says, in these cities, too, quantities of foreigners were to be found.

But while accepting the peaceful traders, late-sixteenth century Italy must have been unpleasantly aware of the presence of foreign troops—Swiss mercenaries, the French, the Dutch, the Germans. True, the major foreign invasions of Italy belonged to the first half of the sixteenth

Above: Caravaggio, *The Musicians*, 1594-95, 36½ x 46½", Metropolitan Museum of Art, courtesy Courtauld Institute of Art.

*The boy at the right has one shoulder pushed out of his shirt, the gathering at the neck and a seam of which can be seen among the folds of drapery.*



Federico Zuccari, *Frederick Barbarossa Prostrate before Alexander III*, detail, 1582, Doge's Palace, Venice, photograph Anderson.

*The group in the center must have been copied by the painter from an early sixteenth-century picture; their clothes are not a revival of past fashion. The woman and child in the foreground wear late sixteenth-century dress.*

century and not to its end, but it is evident from the presence of their exotic uniforms in so many late sixteenth-century Italian paintings that foreign soldiers were a familiar sight.

It was a hesitant and at the same time an eclectic period. Architecture and sculpture had not yet swung into the full molten exuberance of baroque, and yet the background to the baroque spirit had already come into being. The Counter-Reformation and the wars of religious and national independence were gradually producing a state of mind which could only be expressed in terms of melodrama. Tintoretto, the last great painter of the sixteenth century, was still painting in Venice, side by side with a host of grandiose but prosy artists who were efficient enough at covering great canvases but incapable of producing pictures sufficiently memorable to tempt any but the most conscientious art historians to study them in later years. Not in Venice only, but all over Italy huge areas of paint commemorated the glories of Italy's past and sadly bore witness to the fact that Italy no longer felt certain that she had a present or a future. It was in this twilight

world that the early paintings of Caravaggio were first encountered.

Caravaggio, since his first triumphs and his later revival, has long been ignored, but now he is on the crest of fashion. Almost brutally realistic as a painter, he is at the moment being regarded with a respect which comes near, here and there, to a romantic attachment. A comprehensive exhibition of his work, including school pictures, was held in 1951, accompanied by a fine catalogue; in the same year, Mr. Bernard Berenson, published an atmospheric book about him, and Professor Lionelli Venturi produced a study which includes superb color reproductions; and important galleries in Europe and America have rehung his paintings and those of his contemporaries or have added Caravaggios to their collections.

It is doubtful whether any art historian, writing in this new enthusiasm for the newly discovered Caravaggio, has omitted to quote the comment of Federico Zuccari, one of the late sixteenth-century coverers of canvases referred to above, on first being confronted with a Caravaggio painting: "I don't see anything here but the

concept of Giorgione"; and it is not impossible that it is this comment which has given rise to the theory that Caravaggio deliberately dressed up his boy models in the clothes of Giorgione's period and then painted them.

Federico Zuccari could not have fallen into this error, for, in one of his paintings in the Doge's Palace in Venice, he incorporated into a picture dated 1582 and full of contemporary documentation a group of figures evidently copied from the earlier painting that occupied the same position on the wall and which had been executed during Giorgione's lifetime but destroyed by one of the great fires of the 1570's. This group, in *Frederick Barbarossa Prostrate before Alexander III*, wears the dress of the Giorgione period, so nobody knew better than Zuccari what that dress was like; and one has only to study his painting to see that, although the clothes of some of Caravaggio's characters are a little reminiscent of the beginning of the sixteenth century, they are really very different both in spirit and in detail.

However, since the theory that Caravaggio often used a species of "fancy dress" has been put forward, an analysis of the clothes he painted may be valuable, but it is first necessary to examine briefly the current fashion of his day.

The design of clothes at the end of the sixteenth century varied not only from country to country but was unusually varied in Italy herself—not because each city had developed a regional character in clothes but because, as was natural, an eclectic period produced an eclectic mood in dress. While in England the angular sumptuousness of the familiar Elizabethan dress was characteristic, in Germany the tendency was for clothes to be floppy and bulging, in France to be rigid but capable of melting into an elegant softness in parts of the dress, and in Italy to vary between a rigidity reminiscent of the French taste and a softness more in character with both the Italian classic temperament and the approaching spirit of baroque.

Although it was possible in Italy to encounter the big starched ruffs which we associate with the reign of Elizabeth I, they were by no means common. The Englishman, Moryson, writing his *Itinerary* between 1605 and 1617, reports that the Italians favor gowns of light stuffs, that their "apparrell is soft and delicate" but that they "make no fine linnen, and therefore use only coarse linnen, both for shirts and other uses of the family, and commonly wear little falling bands, and many times ruffs of Flanders linnen sometimes wrought with Italian cut work . . . but their ruffs are not so great as ours and they have little skill in washing, starching and smoothing linnen."

As is natural, large ruffs appeared in Italy on state occasions and were worn by grand sitters for their portraits, but otherwise the "falling band," which is very much like the soft collar on a modern sports shirt, was the usual neckwear for

men. Caravaggio's men and boys nearly all wear them, though he does paint ruffs. The stylish *sous-officier* in his *Fortuneteller* wears a little ruff which, being Italian, is allowed to fall back with its strings unfastened rather than to be pulled stiffly around the neck. De Bruyn illustrates the northern counterpart in his *sous-officier*, or page, of Antwerp. The Antwerp boy naturally wears a large ruff, fastened around the neck, but the big stiff hats with their wealth of feathers worn by both boys are very similar, though Caravaggio's boy wears his with a southern swagger that de Bruyn denies to his earnest little Belgian.

Women's shirts or chemises were, in Italy, not trimmed with "falling bands" nor were they commonly worn with ruffs, but many of them reverted to the fashion of the beginning of the sixteenth century. They were once more gathered up, sometimes with embroidered trimming, to stand in a tight little band around the neck topped by a small frill. The shirt of the girl in the *Fortuneteller* was a common type during the last five years of the sixteenth century and the first five years of the seventeenth; it is one of those revivals of a past fashion which are to be met with throughout the history of dress.

In women's dresses and headdresses, in fact, as well as in their shirts, there was a marked reminiscence of the beginning of the sixteenth century. The women in Jacopo Ligozzi's *Visitation* of 1596 in the Cathedral at Lucca might almost belong to 1515, and yet they are wearing a strictly fashionable dress of their own period. The return of the custom of wearing tied-in sleeves, and therefore the return of the custom of wearing the dress without the sleeves tied in for informal occasions, together with the return of turban draperies around the head are all a part of this revival of a past fashion and a sign of the antiquarian spirit that both resulted from and inspired the researches of costume historians like Vecellio. (A similar antiquarian spirit appeared in the dress of the early nineteenth century accompanying the gothic revival.) Caravaggio's *Sleeping Magdalene* looks very much like Titian's *Young Woman at Her Toilet* (Louvre) painted nearly eighty years earlier; both are in semi-undress.

At least two of these dresses have been preserved: one is in the Museum in Pisa, the other in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass. The sleeves which once tied into the Pisa dress have disappeared; the sleeves of the Boston dress are partly sewn into the armhole, so that the arm could be slipped out of them when the ribbons which knotted them to the shoulder were untied. Both dresses date from the end of the sixteenth or the first years of the seventeenth century, and both are of velvet patterned in a small design, but it is obvious from the engravings of de Bruyn, Vecellio and Franco that large-patterned damasks and brocatelles were extremely popular too. The liking for these large designs could perhaps also



Caravaggio, *Fortune teller*, 39 x 51 1/2", The Louvre, Paris (from Venturi, *Caravaggio*, Novara, 1951)

be regarded as a part of the Giorgione-period revival, for although they had no doubt been manufactured in Italy throughout the sixteenth century, such boldness of color contrast was not greatly in favor during the third quarter of the century. Mr. Berenson is making an assumption in asserting that both Caravaggio's Magdalene and his Narcissus boy are wearing the same ma-

terial—an old piece that the artist had lying about in his studio. Not only is the stuff that they are wearing not the same, but both were a part of the current fashion.

Most of Caravaggio's smart boys wear large-patterned damask doublets, and so does the richly-dressed page in Aliense's *Doge Enrico Dandolo Crowning Baldovino* of about 1585. It is pos-

Page and Drummer (left) and German Uniforms (right), engravings from Abraham de Bruyn, *Omnium pene Europae, Asiae, Africae atque Americae gentium habitus*, Antwerp, 1581, photograph Barrattis







Jacopo Ligozzi, *Visitation*, detail, 1596, Cathedral, Lucca, photograph W. F. Mansell.

Note the close similarity of women's fashions of the 1590's to those of the early sixteenth century. The girl in the background wears a chemise almost exactly like that worn by Caravaggio's *Fortuneteller*; the girl in profile wears a headdress with turban silhouette.

sible, by matching the design of the damask worn by Caravaggio's *Magdalene* with an actual surviving piece of one of these late sixteenth-century damasks (there is one in the Victoria and Albert Museum), to discover that modifications appear in both of them as compared with the earlier versions of the same design.

Caravaggio uses the small sprig pattern, which is not a revival but an innovation of the late sixteenth century, for the doublet of the sinister figure who appears behind the table on the right in the *Card Sharpers*. This man wears the dress and hat of the soldier off duty. (Vecellio illustrates a *soldato disarmato* who wears exactly the same uniform and the same rather ferociously curling mustache.) On half-pay or no pay, he is the counterpart of Shakespeare's Pistol. His accomplice, the urchin with his back to the spectator, is also probably wearing something akin to military dress since, although his clothes are completely contemporary in cut, the bold applied stripes of black on the damask doublet suggest either a uniform or a household livery—in this case, that of an impoverished establishment. Caravaggio carefully records the stitches that hold his sleeve into the armhole of his doublet. The clerk counting the money (sometimes thought to be St. Matthew himself) at the end of the table in the

*Vocation of St. Matthew* wears a similar doublet with partly attached sleeves—a type of male costume that owes nothing to an earlier fashion—which can be found in all the costume books of the day. Domenico Bassignano's painting of a procession, dated 1590, in the Salviate Chapel in San Marco, Florence, shows several examples of this dress, but there is scarcely a contemporary painting that does not include some. The *Card Sharpers* surely presents no problems and can give rise to no theories as far as its clothes are concerned. A drawing for it exists which shows that in the painting Caravaggio, with his love for rounded shapes, has slightly increased the volume of the sleeves worn by the wealthy boy who is being cheated but has otherwise portrayed normal contemporary dress. This boy wears one of the "falling bands" described by Moryson; it is trimmed, not with Italian cutwork but with Italian embroidery.

The little boys in the *Vocation of St. Matthew* are far more disturbing, but I believe that they have puzzled art historians unnecessarily. Their enigma lies not in the fact that their clothes are strange but in the fact that one cannot easily recognize the part these boys play in society. They are dressed in expensive damasks with fine tufts of plumes in their hats, yet they are cer-





Caravaggio, *The Card Sharpers*,  
39 x 54 1/2", formerly Sciarra Collection, Rome  
(from Venturi, *Caravaggio*, Novara, 1951)



Opposite:  
Caravaggio, *Vocation of St. Matthew*, c. 1597,  
129 1/8 x 137", S. Luigi de' Francesi, Rome  
(from Venturi, *Caravaggio*, Novara, 1951)

*Soldier Off Duty*,  
engraving from Cesare Vecellio,  
*De gli habiti antichi et moderni  
di diverse parti del mondo*,  
Venice, 1590,  
courtesy The Pierpont Morgan Library

tainly not young aristocrats; in the face of their confidence, their negligent ease, one cannot, on the other hand, regard them as guttersnipes. While they are obviously dressed out of their class, they wear their clothes with ease and familiarity. This familiarity, which alone should make untenable the theory that they have been specially dressed up, gives the clue to their identity: they are, like the little boys who appear in the paintings of Tintoretto, Aliense, Federico Zuccari, Santa di Tito and a score of other late-sixteenth-century artists, the pages who were an indispensable part of the retinue of any man of substance. They do not wear the clothes of Giorgione's day; the dresses of Caravaggio's women, the Magdalene, St. Catherine, the woman in the portrait formerly in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum (destroyed in 1945), are far more reminiscent of the beginning of the sixteenth century than are the clothes of these pages. Yet they do not wear quite normal dress. They are in livery, and, as both late

sixteenth-century painting and late sixteenth-century fashion-books show us, the liveries and uniforms of the time were exotic. Their doublets are of the fashionable cut and so are their shirts, but their sleeves are abnormally large (possibly enlarged partly by Caravaggio's interpretation) and the dark lines of appliqué trimming make an abnormally strong contrast against the pale background of silk, a characteristic of the uniforms and liveries of the period.

As a rule the pages in pictures of devotion or homage are without hats, though both Cesare Grazie in a painting of 1583 in the Church of the Servi in Rimini, and Ventura Salimbeni of Siena, include boys wearing hats with heavily massed long plumes. There are, moreover, plenty of flourishing plumes to be found in the hats of the various men-at-arms of all nations that fill in the backgrounds and the foregrounds of contemporary paintings. Tintoretto's Gonzaga panels, for instance, contain a comprehensive variety. The





Jacopo Tintoretto, *Capture of Parma*, detail showing uniforms of French soldiers, 1580, Munich, Alte Pinakothek

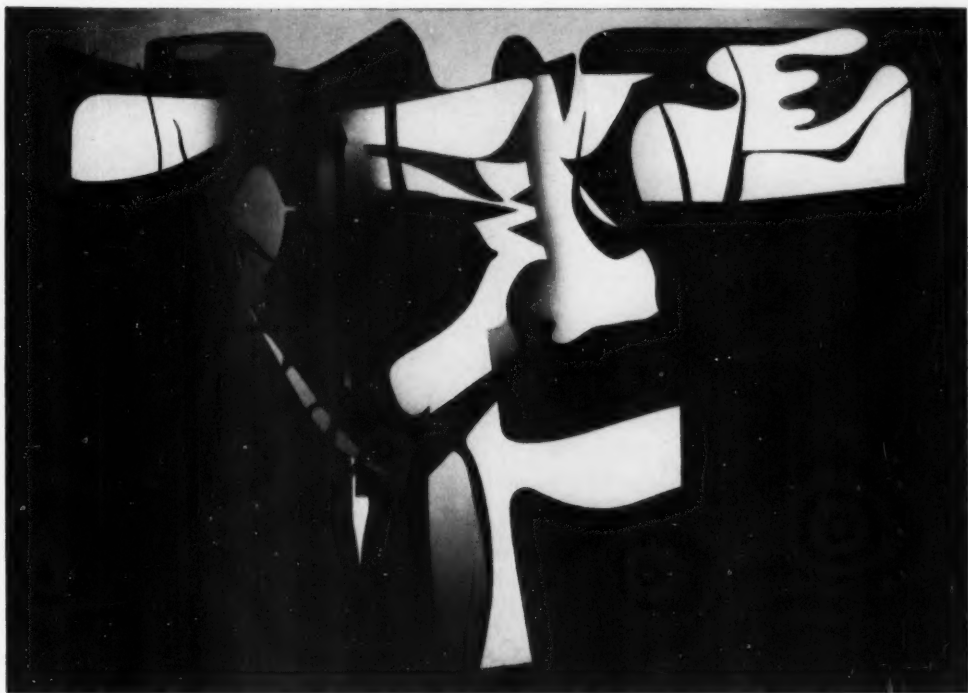
long-feathered hat, worn at a rakish angle, must have been a familiar sight in Italy, though not as a part of civilian dress.

An illustration to *La Première partie du Compte de Richard Cooke* of 1584, showing Henry III of France at table, includes pages who, like Caravaggio's boys in the *Vocation of St. Matthew*, wear no trunks or slops over their hose; the practice was unusual in civilian dress at this late date, but de Bruyn shows that it persisted even then. The page in Caravaggio's *Seven Acts of Mercy*, however, wears the more usual long breeches of the early seventeenth century.

It would indeed be strange if Caravaggio, who paints with such integrity the frills around the neck of the man who hoists St. Peter crucified on the cross in the *Martyrdom of St. Peter* (S. Maria del Popolo, Rome) and of the weeping Magdalene in his Vatican *Deposition*, should suddenly transport a handful of characters into the past, for even when he is determined to remove his picture into a timeless era—and here is the final proof of his relentless realism—he employs contemporary dress, though contemporary dress disguised. His *Luteplayer* in the *Hermitage* wears her chemise unfastened but with the front edges tucked away

to hide its character; the angel in the *Death of St. Francis* has slipped an arm out of his shirt and knotted the redundant sleeve with the tail of his shirt around his waist. This device, invented by Botticelli, was so useful that it reappears continuously throughout the sixteenth century, and to no one was it more useful than to Caravaggio.

Had Caravaggio lived and painted at the end of the fifteenth century rather than at the end of the sixteenth, no confusion could have arisen over the clothes in his pictures. As it was, he lived in a period when the growth of nationalism had produced not only a host of uniforms of fiercely nationalistic designs—and civilian livery follows the design of military dress—but had distributed its soldiers far and wide. He lived, too, in a period when the arts of the renaissance were melting into the arts of the baroque seventeenth century. Civilian dress itself was in a state of flux. The dress of late sixteenth-century Italy is recorded in huge unemphatic canvases and in costume books. In neither is it exposed to the dramatic lighting or interpreted through the violent eye of Caravaggio, but it is gravely and painstakingly recorded, and it bears witness to the fact that Caravaggio was no archaist.



## CHARLES HOWARD

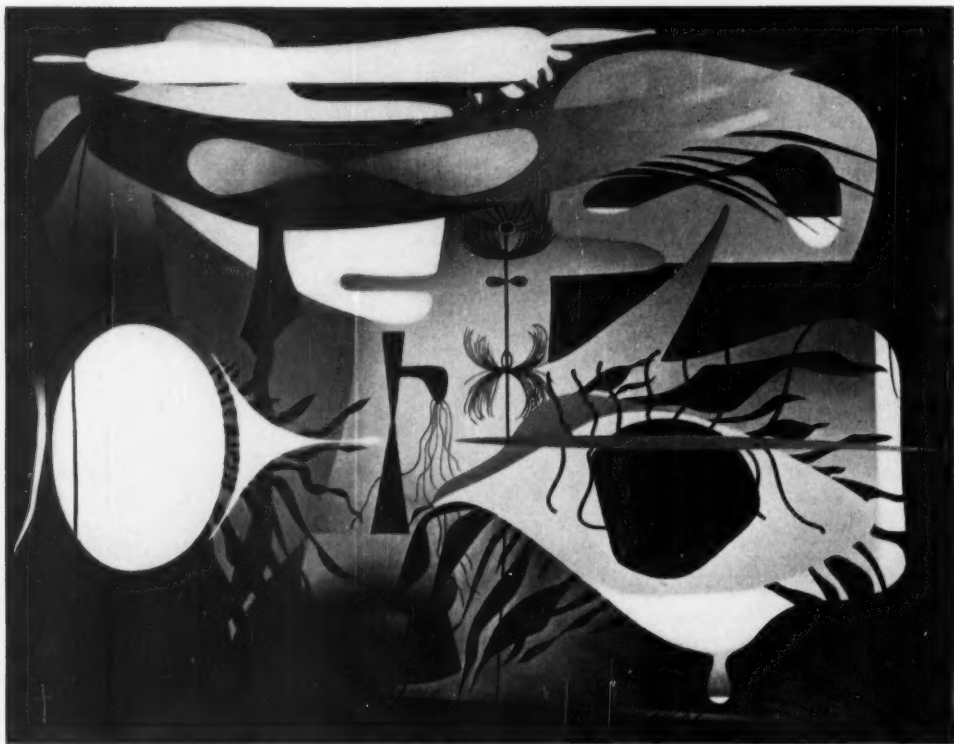
*Douglas MacAgy*

IN the course of an illuminating article written for this magazine seven years ago (February, 1946), Charles Howard observed that, in a sense, his pictures were "all portraits of the same general subject." Each one, he said, was carried as far as he was able to carry it at the time; and it was his view that a group of them, when seen together, tended to implement one another in relation to the common subject. Since then Howard has been living in England, where groups of his more recent paintings have been shown, but until this spring the later works have appeared singly in American exhibitions. Now, at Santa Barbara, it is possible to see a number of them together. As followers of Howard's career would expect, his

recent paintings disclose a vision that is consistent with the insight previous pictures afford. It is so consistent, in fact, as to suggest the continuing presence in his mind of the general subject which his earlier works were believed by him, in their various ways, to portray. At the same time the form has changed: it has been carried further. In the light of this development it might be of interest to reflect for a moment on the nature of the prevailing subject to which Howard has referred.

We might start again with the observation that his earlier paintings, at least, were "all portraits of the same general subject." It is a provocative remark—reminiscent, perhaps, of Plato's parable about the shadow-play in the cave. The

Above: *The Matement*, 1949, oil, 24 x 34", collection of the artist, courtesy California Palace of the Legion of Honor



Dove Love, 1945, oil, 18 x 24", collection Mr. and Mrs. Douglas MacAgy, San Francisco, Calif., courtesy California Palace of the Legion of Honor

pictures are images of the subject, but in them it is "only partially revealed." Like the shadow, the representation is incomplete. On the given occasion, though, his concern is to present the image as precisely as the surface and defining light will allow. The process is exacting, full of false starts, ambushed by the distractions that a hundred-and-one irrelevant habits are only too ready to prompt. In the end, he says, "you get back only a fraction of what you originally saw." On the way he finds the medium untrustworthy, as the irregular surface of a wall will bend and twist a cast shadow. His vision momentarily plays tricks on him. It is as if, in his act of determining the image, the light flickers and edges around the subject, distorting the shadow. And the shadow, in the parable, is all that we are permitted to see.

When he wrote about this elusive form of portraiture, Howard was, of course, thinking of his own experiences in painting. No doubt our experiences in looking at them don't match his in their making. Yet if the thing he is after is by nature elusive, some aspect of that elusive nature

may very well reside in the image. He has said that he doesn't uncover secrets, that he deals with material "which is the possession of all people," and that may be so; but I venture to suggest that the possessions he reveals, though they may haunt our innermost thoughts, are not ones we can name. The experience of elusiveness is not the sort that comes to an end, as the feeling of groping for a word dissolves the moment the word is discovered. Howard's form does not grope; it probes. It seems to reach into a realm of human drama where feelings have not yet been differentiated and circumscribed by a nomenclature. He may be after a shadow that might be part of ourselves, but he is surely not in quest of a *nomini umbra*. It is true that he associates titles with his pictures. They are meant to be "supplementary and allusive"; in most cases they steer one away from the common tendency to dispose of a thing by giving it a name, and in many they hint of a state that is prior to pigeon-hole discourse. Examples, picked at random: *Prefiguration*, *Presentiment*, *Prescience*, *Omen*, *Presage*.

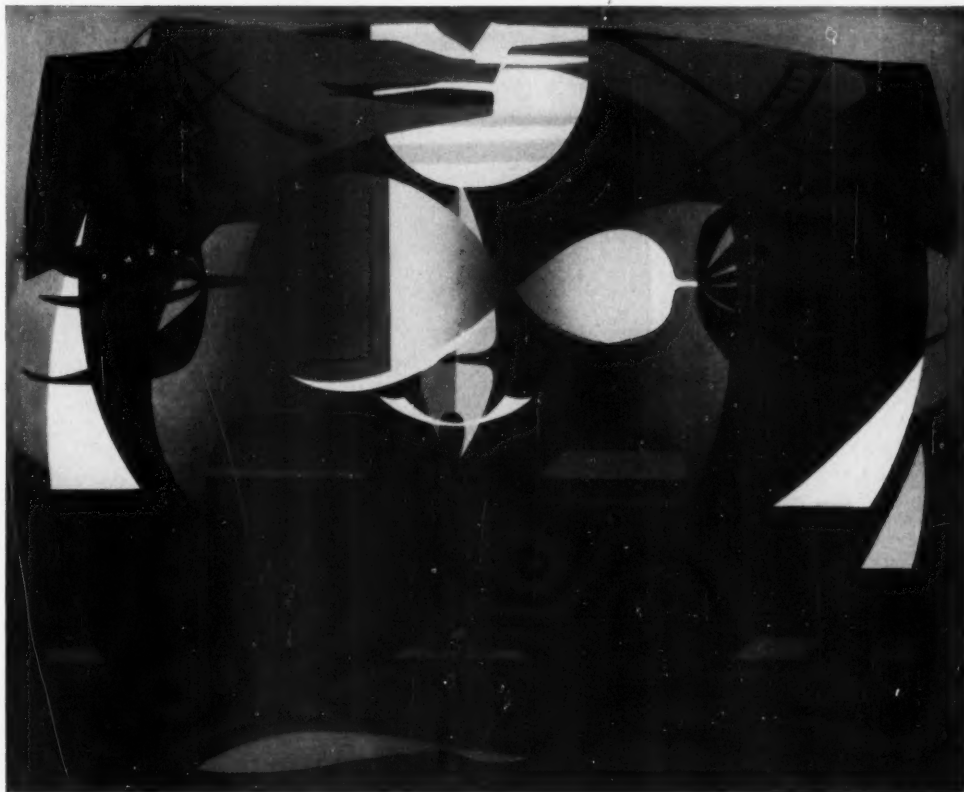


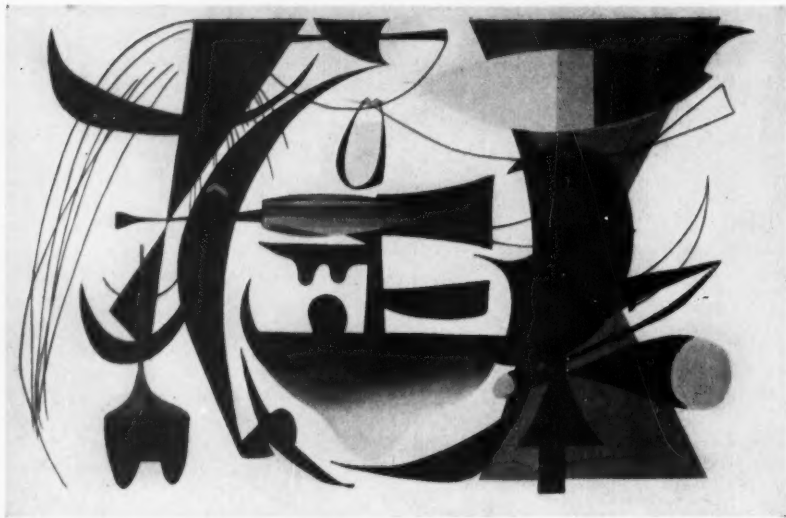
Fourteen years ago, George Reavey referred to the shapes in Howard's paintings as "presences," and even then Reavey found in them a restlessness—"a world in dissolution and remaking"—which has since become much more apparent. The term "presence" is also still apt. It is a projection of our response to the work. There have been many portraits of "presences," but our response to Howard's indicates something special. We may walk into a room lined with portraits by Modigliani and suddenly discover in ourselves the incipient mannerisms that are usually touched off by the sight of strange company at a cocktail party. If we are used to such affairs, a little mechanism of conversational feints, thrusts and parries—refined, hardened and polished by repetition—is almost automatically set to go. I don't propose this cagey attitude as the appropriate one in the presence of Modigliani's portraits, but I do suggest that likeness of an overt kind may tend to

freeze a response into patterns set by habits which allow for little penetration into human thought and feeling. Even the everyday drama of our lives goes deeper than the ordinary play of our words seems to indicate, but at face value the words have a way of blocking our insight. More than sixty years ago, William James drew attention to our stilted notions about consciousness. We often put a premium on the slow image, the sort one has time to name or draw a line around, and neglect the fleeting, transitive feelings that qualify and dramatize our thought. Howard is sensitive to the comprehensive rhythm. It is this "world in dissolution and remaking" to which I believe Reavey referred, and it is to this world that Howard seems to have been attending with increasing power of expression in recent years.

Apart from his paintings on paper, where an untouched ground is shaped and placed by areas of color, for a long time Howard has favored

*The Genuine Image, 1947, oil, 16 x 20", collection Ronald Morris, Cambridge, England*

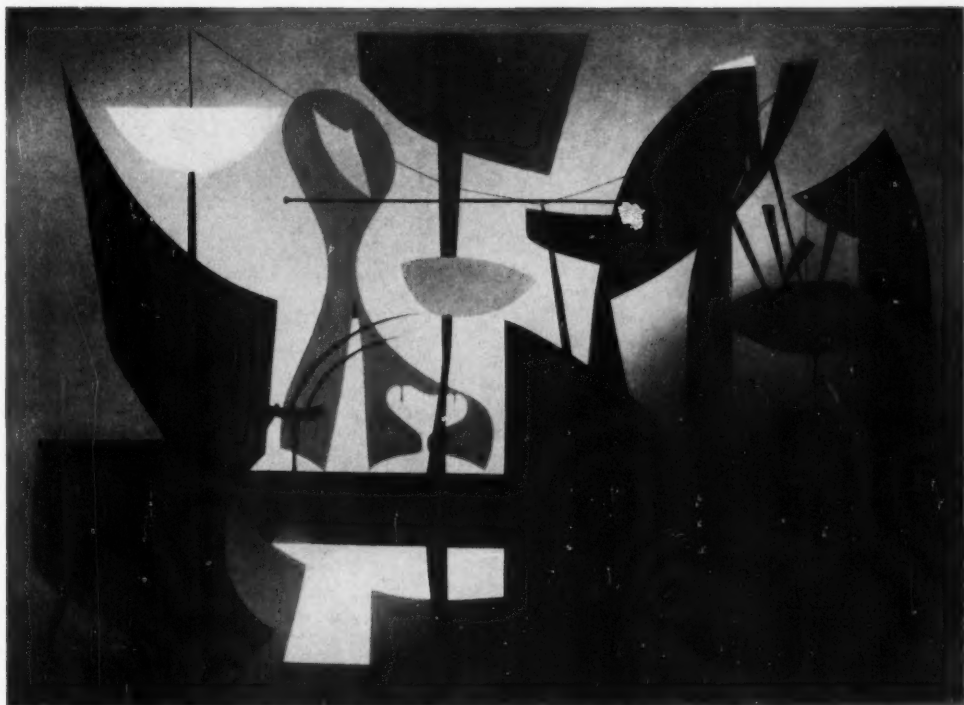




Demonstration of the Paris, 1948, gouache, 23 x 15 1/2", collection of the artist

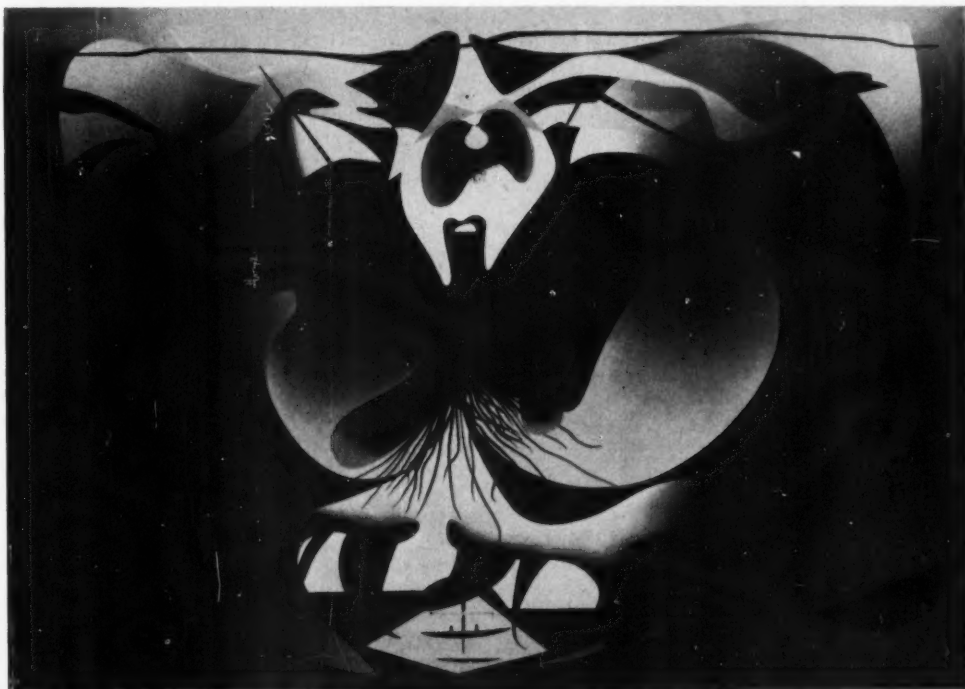
a form in which shapes are poised against and within an outwardly darkening space. The shapes in earlier pictures often emphatically maintain an individual identity, even when they combine with others as units of a larger configuration. During the past few years the darkening nimbus has shown a tendency to advance and to engage with the shapes in more complex and more continuous rhythms. There is a deepened power, intensity and range of feeling in the ways color and chiaroscuro work together. The subtleties of these rhythms are largely obscured in black-and-white reproduction. At both ends of the light and dark scale, areas of the same value separate into passages that are distinguished only by delicate differences in color, much as a variety of musical instruments may sound the same note and yet, by their variance of overtone, detach and qualify the choirs. Everywhere color modulates the illumination, allowing a chill blaze here or a somber glow there. The light moves over, into and through the shapes, drawing space with it, accenting an edge, retiring another. A single line will do the job of two or three, outlining adjoining shapes, disappearing, reappearing to carry on the rhythm the conjunction began. Strands hover like wands, or tighten in barbed menace. It is a moving world, of meetings and partings, gentle and cruel, austere and elegant. It is elusive, wayfaring: a drama of the mind.

**Note:** An exhibition of recent paintings by Charles Howard, including some of the works here reproduced, is on view at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art through April 26th.



*First War-Winter, 1939-40, oil, 24 1/2 x 34", San Francisco Museum of Art, courtesy California Palace of the Legion of Honor*

*Ultimate Recesses, 1949, oil, 24 x 34", Collection Gordon Onslow-Ford, San Francisco*



# EXOTIC INFLUENCES IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

*Dimitri Tselos*

*"The appreciation of beauty on the part of  
the primitive peoples . . . was unerring."*

—FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

*"I believe that out of the past comes the  
best of the present and that out of the present  
comes the future."*

—FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

IN the minds of many enthusiastic admirers, almost all the mature works of Frank Lloyd Wright have appeared to be completely free from the influence of other architecture either of the distant or the near past. Whenever such influence was suggested it was either dismissed or minimized. The present study intends to show that, like other great artists and great men, he is not an island but a part of the continent—a lofty pinnacle of the "maine," to paraphrase Donne.

Wright's master, Louis Sullivan, like Richardson before him, tried hard to abandon his Beaux-Arts training and to avoid the revivalist formulas that characterized his strictly academic contemporaries. But like Richardson he was not able to emancipate himself completely from tradition. In theory Sullivan replaced the academic formulas by a biological romanticism symbolized by his famous dictum, "form follows function." In practice his buildings seem to have evolved from the medieval tradition, especially the Richardsonian romanesque, and his ornament from different historical motives energized by his biological "vitalism" which—like the *Art Nouveau* and his "functionalism,"—was largely the product of one aspect of nineteenth-century romanticism.

Among the various instruments that fed the romantic longing of the stay-at-home in the nineteenth century, one of the most important was the international exposition, which like a magic carpet brought him at his feet samples of peoples and cultures of distant lands: the Persian Bazaar with the Lapland Village, the Nippon Tea House with the Turkish Coffee Shop, the furred Eskimo with the loin-clothed Samoan, and many other exhibits from near and far. The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1892 contained such gifts in a more generous measure than its predecessors. Like some of them, it was destined to become a crucial turning point in the taste of the sponsoring country. It is generally agreed that the effects of the Chicago Fair on American architecture were regressive rather than progressive, in so far as its

buildings were pastiches or polished quotations. Yet it can be shown that at least Frank Lloyd Wright was able to convert what appeared to be some inconsequential contributions to the Fair into important constituents of his mature career, so that in retrospect we can look upon the Fair as only temporarily the field of a "lost cause," and his work as the final victory of the Chicago School and of progressive architecture in the United States and elsewhere.

Among the many exotic exhibits of flesh and art that constituted the microcosm of the Fair on the shore of Lake Michigan, of especial significance for this study were the two groups of Japanese buildings—Ho-o-Den Palace and the Nippon Tea House—and the exhibition of Japanese art in the Fine Arts Palace consisting of architectural models, sculpture, paintings, prints and many kinds of minor arts. The buildings and the prints were to have important consequences for the long and eminently fruitful career of Frank Lloyd Wright, which had then barely begun.

The Japanese prints were listed in the exhibition catalogues, but were nowhere reproduced in the sumptuously illustrated publications on the art at the Fair. In the midst of outworn formulas of sentimental realism and pseudo-classical idealism, their stylized and abstract beauty must have appeared like a fresh and invigorating breath of air to a young American architect who dared refuse a free architectural education at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The love that they kindled in his breast was to continue for a long time and was to be consummated in his making one of the best private collections of such prints and becoming one of the early and few connoisseurs of such art in the United States. The economy and directness of their drawing and their clear-cut patterns revealed a new classicism which must have appealed strongly to Wright, who delighted in clean surfaces and geometric ornament as the only kind possible of integration with architecture. As has been suggested earlier by others, the abstract



Fig. 1.  
Frank Lloyd Wright,  
Cast concrete sculpture,  
Midway Gardens,  
Chicago, 1913,  
photograph Chicago  
Architectural  
Photographing Co.



Fig. 2.  
Shunsho, *Woman*,  
18th c., color woodcut  
(after Hartmann,  
*Japanese Art*,  
Boston, 1904)

qualities of the print may have helped to shape certain indefinable "abstract" features or refinements in his architecture. But it is also probable that specific motives from Japanese prints may have been transferred, as one of the "cubistic" sculptures of standing women for the parapets of the Midway Gardens suggests when compared with a woman by Shunsho (figs. 1, 2).

The most important influence of Japanese art on Wright's work, however, is to be found in his buildings. The houses he had designed before the World's Fair bore similarities to those of the men with whom he was directly or indirectly associated—Silsbee, Sullivan, Richardson—and to those styles then current in this country, such as the Queen Anne, Victorian gothic, neo-Georgian, neo-romanesque and the Italian Vernacular or Italianate. The latter was derived from American and English pattern books, which were indebted in turn to the picturesque travel-book illustrations and to the representations of small Italian villa types in the paintings of Claude Lorrain and his followers. In this country it was probably first used about 1837 by John Notman in the Duane House at Burlington, N. J. In the wake of its subsequent diffusion it appears in some non-residential works of the Adler-Sullivan office while Wright was the chief draftsman, and in Wright's Charnley House. But since the style was more suited to residential architecture, which had become Wright's specialty, it rarely survives in Sullivan's work after Wright left his office.

The most impressive element in Wright's "prairie" houses is the hip roof with projecting eaves hovering over house and ground. The simple hip roof had become a part of the American tradition since the eighteenth century. In the course of the Georgian revival following the Philadelphia Centennial it was duly reflected in the work of McKim, Mead and White and in Wright's Blossom House of 1892. But the gentler pitch of the hip roof overhanging the walls of his Harlan House of the same year and the same features in the Winslow House of 1893 were probably an outgrowth of the Italianate. (The almost pure Italianate villa towers in Wright's Francisco Terrace apartments of 1895 attest the operation of this style within his career.) This type of roof passes almost imperceptibly to one with a still more pronounced overhang, sometimes at one level hovering close to the ground, and sometimes at two or even three levels sheltering closely grouped windows, in the houses which he designed after 1895 and which can properly be called the typical prairie houses. These new features, which seem congenially wedded to the Italianate ones, were probably inspired by the Japanese Buildings at the Fair, especially the Tea House group, whose gently hipped overhanging roofs at two levels and clustered openings under the roofs are remarkably similar to those of Wright's prairie houses, such as the Willitts House of 1902 (Figs.



Fig. 3 Japanese Tea Garden, Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, 1892 (from Arnold and Higginbotham, *Official Views of World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893*)

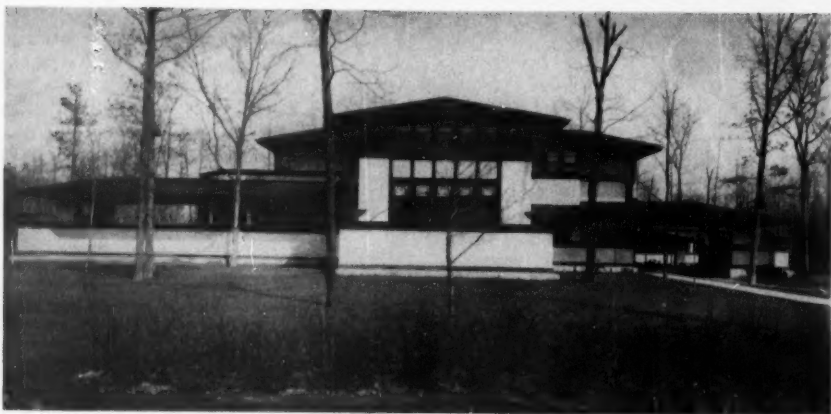
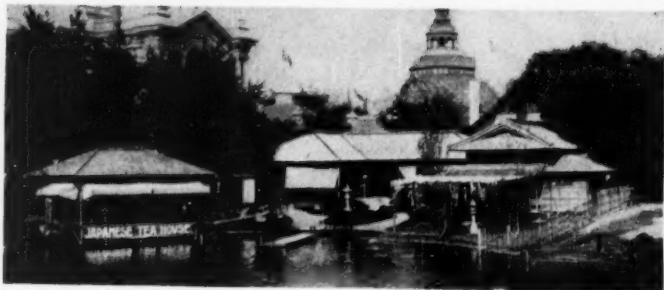


Fig. 4. Frank Lloyd Wright, Willitts House, Highland Park, Ill., 1902, photograph Chicago Architectural Photographing Co.



Fig. 5. Shinyakushiji Temple, Nara, Japan, 8th c.

3, 4). The Willitts House, like many others of the prairie-style period, also shows the typical Japanese method of dividing the exterior or interior walls of houses and temples into rectangular panels. This feature was used in the Japanese buildings at the Fair, but it is seen more effectively in the Temple at Nara (fig. 5). The Willitts House was not the first building to receive such panel treatment. Its earliest appearance occurred in the interior of the

dining room of Wright's own house in Oak Park at the time of its remodeling in 1895—soon after the closing of the Fair. The large rectangular panels separated by narrow vertical moldings extending from baseboard to ceiling are in definite contrast to the Queen Anne wainscoting of the living room of 1889.

The foregoing architectural parallels provide samples of what seem to be important charac-

teristics in the formation of Wright's early mature style. They continue to operate in one degree or another throughout his career, always of course with an ingenious "twist" or innovation of which he is preeminently capable. But his homage to Japanese art is revealed in many other ways; in the subtle curvature of the edges of his eaves, in the boldly tipped-up corners of the roofs, the narrow clerestory in the first floor of his houses, the use of vertical wood strips for screens and furniture, the rectangular lamps at the corners of the dining table of the Robie House, and the adaptation of Japanese stone lanterns or small shrines into birdhouses. Careful analysis of other features in the structure and decoration of his houses would probably reveal more elements of Japanese inspiration. But, as in the foregoing instances, one is not likely to find any copying but only judicious and imaginative transformation of a germinal form which Wright used as a starting point. The Japanese suggestions in his houses are but tributes to the artistic genius of the Japanese, whose architecture and other arts he admired greatly. These were probably first revealed to him at the Fair, but he undoubtedly learned more about them from his collection of prints, from the many publications on Japanese art in the 'eighties and 'nineties, and from personal observation during his several visits to Japan afterwards.

The Japanese influence—especially the gentle hovering overhanging roof—remained an important ingredient in Wright's prairie houses and whenever in his later career he returns to that style. But just as European representational art of impressionism and expressionism was to turn from the inspiration of Japanese prints and painting of the Middle East to some form of primitive art in the formative stages of cubism and primitivism, so Wright seems to have turned from the Japanese of his early prairie style to Pre-Columbian American art for some important features in his later mature work.

American travelers and archeologists had investigated the ancient ruins of southern Mexico and Yucatan and produced a surprisingly large number of publications before the World's Fair. But there is no evidence that Wright knew anything about Pre-Columbian art—or, if he knew, whether he was interested in adapting some aspects of it in his architecture—before he saw reproductions of it at the World's Fair.

Partly because the Pre-Columbian exhibit consisted of plaster casts and photographs, and partly because the objects reproduced were then considered more as "artifacts" for the anthropologist than as works of art for the artist and architect, they were exhibited in one of the anthropological buildings and their surrounding grounds. Thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Edward H. Thompson (1860-1935), American consul at Merida, Yucatan, and archeologist for the Peabody Museum, full-size casts were made of the

great arch at Labna, and three monuments of Uxmal: the central portion of the Temple of the Serpents, two sections of the Nunnery, and the Straight Arch. Moreover, there were casts of a large monolith, of many sculptured stelae and numerous photographs of other monumental sculpture and of buildings from other areas of Pre-Columbian culture.

Before answering the question of when Wright began to use Pre-Columbian motives in his architecture, let us look first at a most striking analogy between his A. D. German Warehouse at Richland Center, Wisconsin, and the Temple of the Three Lintels at Chichén Itzá (figs. 6, 7). Both buildings consist of a large, massive body perforated by three narrow openings and dominated by a disproportionately highly decorative frieze of geometric decoration. Their similarities are such as to exclude pure coincidence of two independent productions. A detail which would help to confirm the probable influence of the Mayan monument on Wright's building is the use of the diagonal corner brackets on the warehouse to carry the flag posts. These were, I believe, inspired by the typical Mayan hooked tongues which protrude diagonally from the stylized faces carved on the corners of the temple. The brackets, like the broad frieze flaring out at the top and bottom and the stratified piers flanking the protruding entrance pavilion, are special characteristics of Mayan architecture and incompatible with the earlier development of Wright's work. Their appearance therefore outside their "habitat" in Central America should be considered inspired by works of that culture.

But this evident dependence of Wright upon Mayan architecture must not be confused with the revivalist imitations of renaissance and gothic architecture that dotted our cities and countryside during the previous two generations. For the abstract and zoomorphic ornament of the Mayan temple carved on stones imbedded in the fabric of the building, Wright substituted a truly abstract geometric ornament impressed into blocks of pre-cast concrete decorating the warehouse. The latter method was not only an imaginative adaptation of the Mayan decorative frieze but also a more ingenious and honest invention for improving the appearance of the pre-cast concrete block than the more familiar travesties of concrete—imitations of rusticated stone.

It is difficult to answer the question of when Wright began to apply aboriginal American motives in his architecture, because the earliest surviving evidence is found not in an existing building, but in a drawing. Nevertheless, I believe that he intended to apply it at the same time and at the same place as his first use of Japanese elements—in his house during its remodeling in 1895. A drawing of the time (fig. 8) shows a perspective view of the house, as it was presumably to be remodeled externally, and in front of it three other

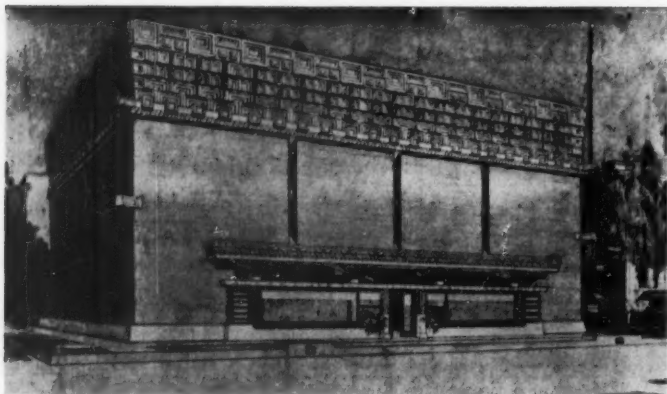


Fig. 6. Frank Lloyd Wright, A. D. German Warehouse, Richland Center, Wisconsin, 1915 (from *L'Architecture Vivante*: Frank L. Wright, Paris, 1930)

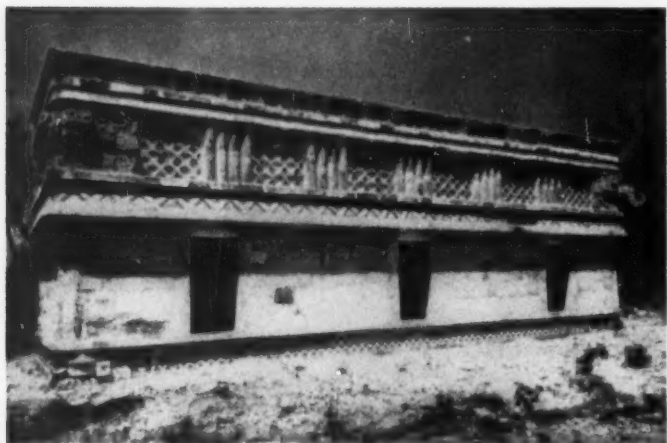


Fig. 7. Temple of Three Lintels, Chichén Itzá, Yucatan (from *Toscana, Arte precolombiana*, Mexico, D.F., 1944)

units which were to be added to the existing structure: from left to right they are the studio, the reception hall and the library. The decorative involvement of the rectangular moldings around and under the windows of the studio and especially those around the clustered windows on the house, within the gable and on the flanking space, as seen behind the reception hall and the library, are strongly suggestive of similar, characteristically Mayan decorative moldings as seen in the east end of the Nunnery at Chichén Itzá (fig. 9). The absence of these features either from the styles current in the United States at the time or from the earlier work of Wright would tend to support my belief that they derive from an external source. Such moldings did not appear in the Mayan plaster casts exhibited at the Fair but were available in a variety of excellent publications, some of them published in Chicago. Wright, with Victor Hugo's *Nôtre-Dame* in mind, condemned the book for killing architecture, but what he probably meant to say was that incorrect reading is a dangerous thing.

Some support for the hypothesis that the decorative moldings were inspired by Mayan architecture is found in another unusual feature that characterizes several of Wright's buildings erected between 1895 and 1905. This is the apparent stratification of the exterior of a masonry building by means of a rectangular stringcourse or strap, or in wooden buildings by the use of a wooden strip over certain shingle joints, or by doubling or tripling the thickness of some courses of narrow shingles at regular intervals, as in the Porter House (figs. 10, 11). The Mayan parallel is a model of the still well-preserved Temple of the Frescoes at Tulun, Yucatan. The absence of this strap in the earlier work of Wright and its presence in all its variants in Pre-Columbian masonry buildings would argue for its importation from there. The strap, however, as well as the earlier moldings, were minor features in the work of Wright, and their Mayan inspiration would have meant very little in his later career.

The opportunity for more effective utilization of the Central American sources was to come

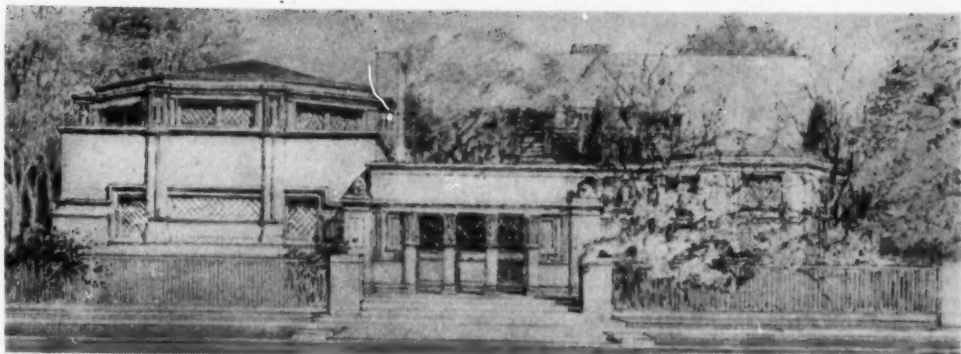


Fig. 8. Frank Lloyd Wright, Project for additions to his own house, Oak Park, Ill., 1895 (from Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials*, New York, 1942)

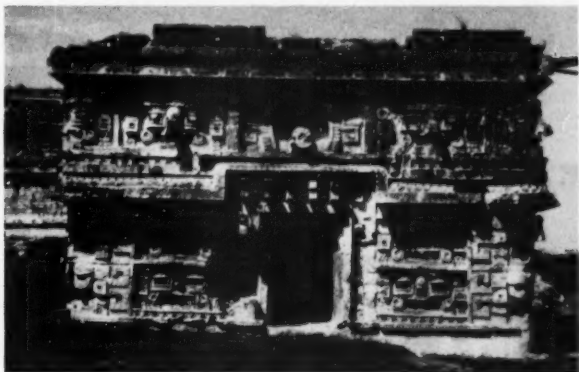


Fig. 9. East end of the Nunnery, Chichén Itzá, Yucatan, photograph V. L. Annis



Fig. 10. Frank Lloyd Wright, Porter House, Hillside, Wis., 1907, courtesy Museum of Modern Art

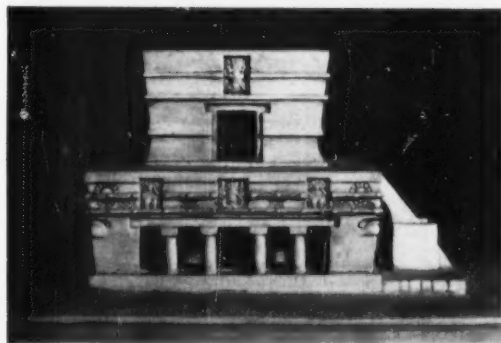


Fig. 11. Model of Temple of the Frescoes, Tulum, Yucatan, courtesy The Brooklyn Museum



upon his invention of the pre-cast concrete block. The "textile" block, as it is also known to distinguish it from the lesser kinds, was integrally enriched with decoration of geometric or "abstract" ornamental patterns in contrasting planes of various depths. It made its first important appearance at the Midway Gardens in Chicago in 1914. Of the buildings of the Chicago School that haunt my childhood memories of the "Windy City," none looms as impressive, gay, festive and fabulously beautiful as this pleasure garden which combined the delightful features of the Paris sidewalk café, the German beer garden, and the hanging gardens of Babylon. "When it was opened," reminisced Mr. Wright in his *Autobiography*, "the Chicagoans came to marvel, acclaim, approve. To many it suggested Egyptian architecture, to others Japanese, to some Mayan." The allusion to Egyptian architecture may have been suggested by the high screens between the piers and under the high windows on the exterior of the restaurant, which are to a degree reminiscent of late Egyptian architecture—at Edfu. The resemblances to Japanese architecture were probably suggested by the decorated masts, the overhangs, the table lamps and other such details. References to Mayan architecture may have been inspired by the over-all decoration of the textile block over a masonry foundation. On the other hand, none of these analogies may have been drawn from sound knowledge of these styles but may have been used merely as synonyms for the exotic or fantastic. (No one seems to have noticed the resemblance of the plan to the basic plan of a Roman Bath.) In any case, the most important connection with the past is the character of the textile block and its contrast to the simplicity of the supporting masonry wall. It has also been used very effectively by Wright in a number of residences in California, for example the well-known Millard "Miniature" in Pasadena. In reality the Central American parallel is not Mayan, but the inner court of a Zapotec palace in Mitla, Mexico; the distinction among the various phases of Pre-Columbian culture in Mexico is, however, rarely observed outside of professional archeological and anthropological circles. Further similarities with the same palace may be noted in comparing the analogous stratification of plain and decorated strata in the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. Here, as in his California houses, Wright may have used massive forms and decorative features inspired by Pre-Columbian architecture. But he did not lose sight of the more important problems presented by the planning of the buildings for modern use and especially for meeting the threat of the periodical earthquakes which visit destructively both California and Japan.

His capacity for assimilating exotic suggestions without sacrificing the demands of the site, purpose or medium is also noted in the utilization of poured concrete in the construction of

the Hollyhock House of Aline Barnsdall in Los Angeles. Being attuned as were the Mayan architects to buildings of mass, he was able once more to adapt some of their forms, but now in poured concrete. The projecting pavilion of the living room of the Barnsdall House is a low, one-story structure, open in the front but otherwise completely walled in at the sides except for an unobtrusive window in the rear next to the chimney. Its most peculiar feature, however, is the hood-like upper part, which recalls a truncated pyramid or a simplified mansard roof. In fact, it is an "attic" or architectural mask for the low-pitched hip roof that covers the entire living room. This pavilion and the emphasis upon the large opening, which is divided into three unequal parts by two piers, is strongly analogous to the Temple of the Tigers at Chichén Itzá (figs. 12, 13). That the monuments of Chichén Itzá played an important part in the formulation of the Barnsdall House and its projected dependencies is even more effectively demonstrated by the project for a theatre (fig. 14) which was never built. Its cubiform mass and the rich ornamentation with cornices and projecting blocks are definitely suggestive of the east end of the Nunnery at Chichén Itzá (fig. 9), which may confirm the theory that the same monument furnished the first Mayan inspiration in the projected decoration of the windows of Wright's own house.

Similar effects occur in other works of Wright during the 'twenties. But about the same time other features that appear in his architecture also point to Pre-Columbian inspiration. One of these is an inverted pyramidal or troughlike structure corbeled out in masonry or clapboard siding. It appears first in the cabin projected for Lake Tahoe, then again in the first project for the Willey House (fig. 15). But it was not actually carried out until the construction of the Suntop Homes at Ardmore, Pennsylvania, in 1939, where it is used in the enclosures of the balconies and roof terraces. It is conceivable that this was inspired by the clapboard siding of the frame house or more likely by wooden boat building as playfully used in the barge cabins for Lake Tahoe. But its presence in these projects in the company of other Pre-Columbian features, such as the decorative moldings already noted, and especially the primitive corbeled arches—an anachronism in modern architecture—suggests once more that these corbeled features were probably inspired by Central American work (fig. 16). This conclusion seems to be further supported by the impracticality of such corbeled siding as enclosures for terraces or balconies. Since the lowest member of the enclosure is nearest the person inside the balcony or the terrace, he cannot possibly rest his arms on the uppermost member without stubbing his toes or leaning awkwardly forward.

The troughlike form, though without the regular external corbeling, is also used in the Mayan temple at Tulun and in the Zapotec pal-



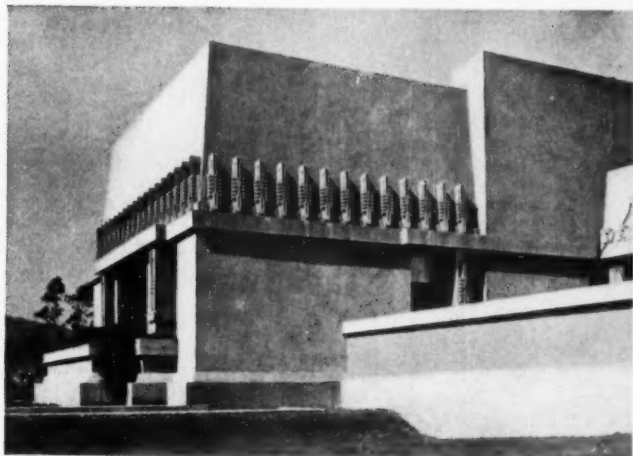
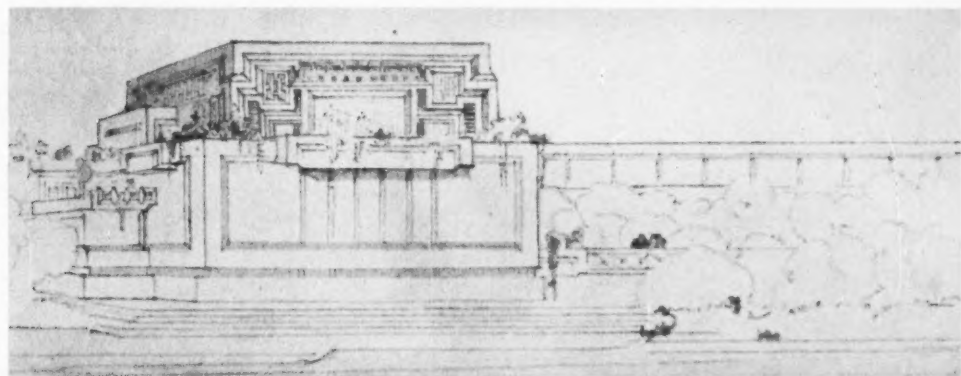


Fig. 12. Hollyhack House of Aline Barnsdall, Los Angeles, Calif., 1920 (from *The Life-work of... Frank Lloyd Wright*, Santpoort, 1925)



Fig. 13. Temple of the Tigers, Chichén Itzá, Yucatan, photograph V. L. Annis

Fig. 14. Frank Lloyd Wright, Project for theatre for Barnsdall House, Los Angeles, Calif., 1917-20 (from *The Life-work of... Frank Lloyd Wright*, Santpoort, 1925)



ace at Mitla (figs. 11, 18). The latter form in its essentials was adapted in the stone enclosure of the terrace of the Pauson House near Phoenix, Arizona, where the corbeled wooden siding is also used in the body of the house (fig. 19). The dynamic effects of this motive must have appealed strongly to Wright, for it appears even in the last published version of the project for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. The most important part of that project is the inverted and truncated cone with a spiral interior ramp that achieves the ultimate in continuous circulation. The spiral ramp for interior circulation is not an entirely new concept, having appeared in modern European projects for houses or museums. Wright's tower, however, seems much more imaginative and more practical than any of its predecessors. But as in other instances the unusual esthetic external aspect of the complex seems to owe more to Central American than to any other

culture. The truncated inverted cone, visually contradicting our sense of stability, is found only in the burial towers of ancient Peru and Bolivia.

In the light of the foregoing comparisons I am tempted to see in the cruciform plan of Wright's Unity Temple and Unity House in Oak Park the basic elements of the two similarly planned and similarly adjacent buildings in Mitla. As in all other instances previously mentioned, however, Wright goes far beyond the initial inspiration in making his buildings impressive monuments, in which the mass is superbly used to enclose space for Christian worship and collateral social activities, integrating all spaces with marvelous vertical and horizontal circulation.

Some significant parallels in ornamental details confirm the evident dependence of Wright upon Pre-Columbian architecture. The most striking of these comparisons is related to the decorative frieze for the Bogk House in Milwaukee, a

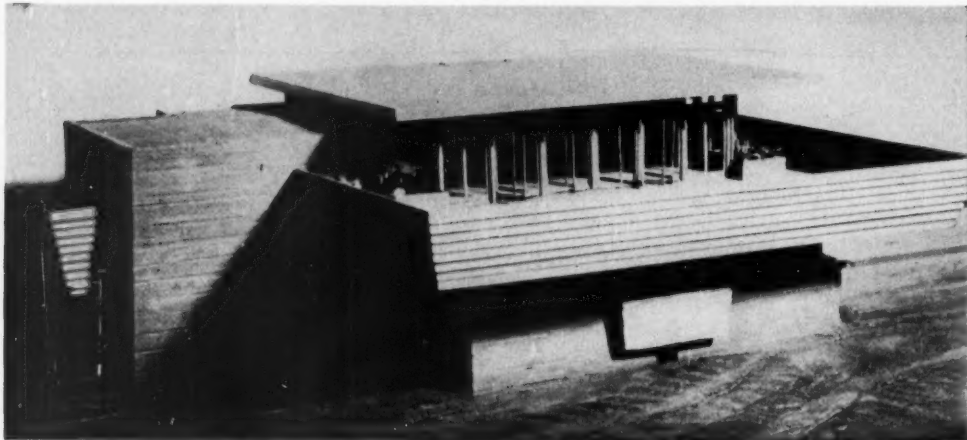


Fig. 15. Frank Lloyd Wright, First model for Malcolm Willey House, Minneapolis, Minn., 1932 (photograph W. A. Weber)



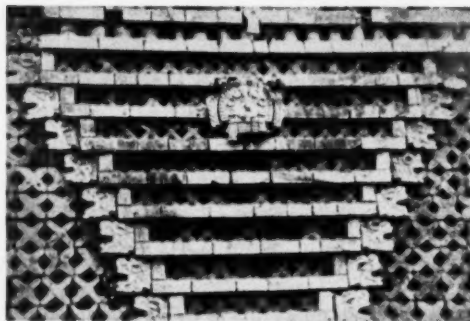
Fig. 16. Entrance to Tomb, Monte Alban, Oaxaca, Mexico (from Toscano, *Arte precolombiana, Mexico*, D. F., 1944)

section of which is shown here in a drawing (fig. 21). The principal unit consists of what appears to be a cherublike torso or head, surrounded by cubiform masses or square planes, and endowed with a long beard of geometric details. The "wings" are made up of horizontal bands diminishing in length from top to bottom. Behind the wings there are sunk lines contrasting with the lines of the wings. Below the wings is a row of diagonally arranged diamond-shaped blocks which seem to terminate the dominant plane and overhang the lower one. At the bottom of the central unit and under the beard is a skeleton stepped

pyramid or a corbeled arch whose blocks are differentiated in the drawing by colors. Practically all the features described are found in similar context in Pre-Columbian sculpture and architectural details. The head with its cubiform headgear is paralleled in a remarkable way by the Aztec Goddess of Agriculture, and by the sculptured "Ex"—loincloth or breechclout—that is worn by male figures represented on many Mayan sculptured stelae (fig. 20), where one also finds what appears to be a ceremonial beard or scarf. The wings in a similar downward diminution and an underlying recessed pattern appear in a portion of the frieze of the Nunnery at Uxmal, Mexico, whose focal point is also occupied by a stylized head or mask (fig. 17). The diamond-shaped blocks under the wings are a detail used in a similarly overhanging plane over the door of the Temple of the Dwarf, also at Uxmal. Lastly, the rectangular units of the skeleton arch or pyramid at the bottom of the Bogk frieze, which were cast

(Continued on page 184)

Fig. 17. Section of frieze from the Nunnery, Uxmal, Mexico (from Totten, *Maya Architecture*, Washington, 1926)



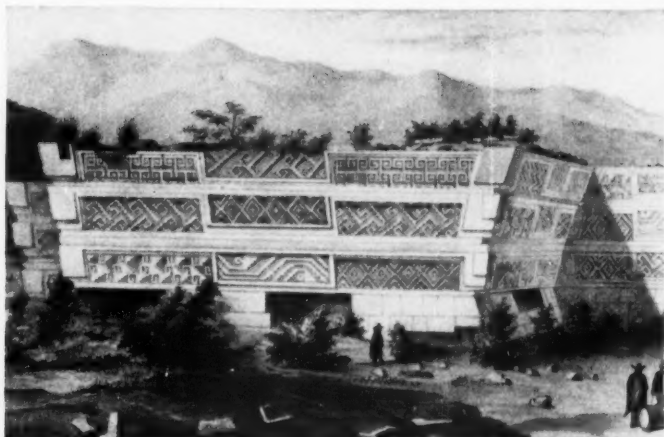


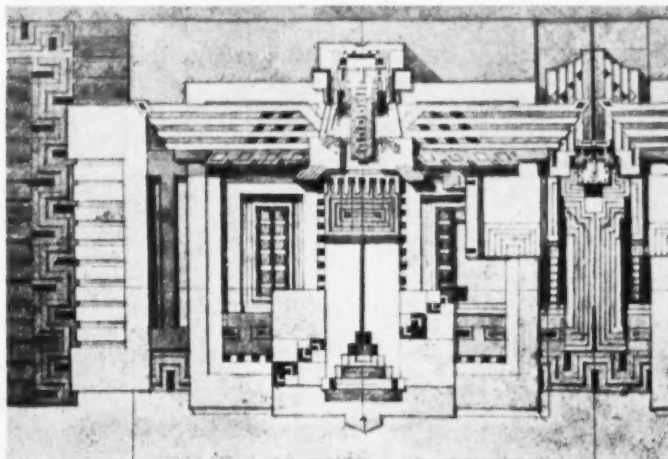
Fig. 18. Zapotec Palace, Mita, Oaxaca, Mexico (from Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, 1857)



Fig. 19. Frank Lloyd Wright, Pauson House, near Phoenix, Ariz., 1940, photograph P. E. Guerrero

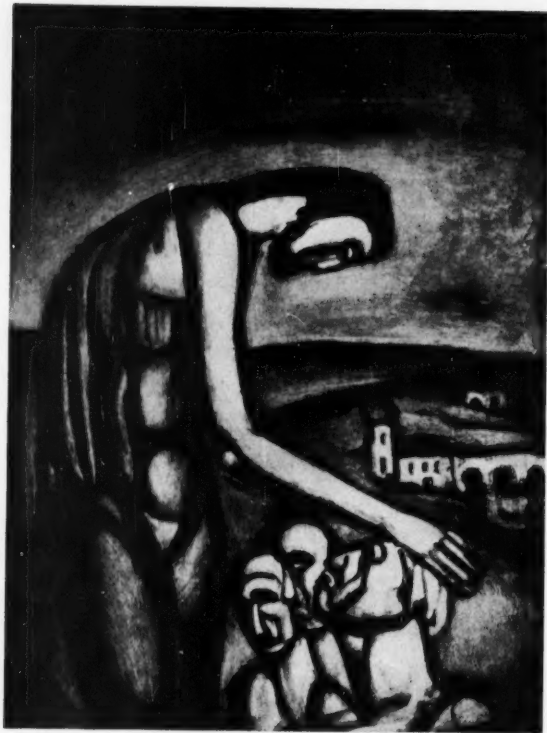
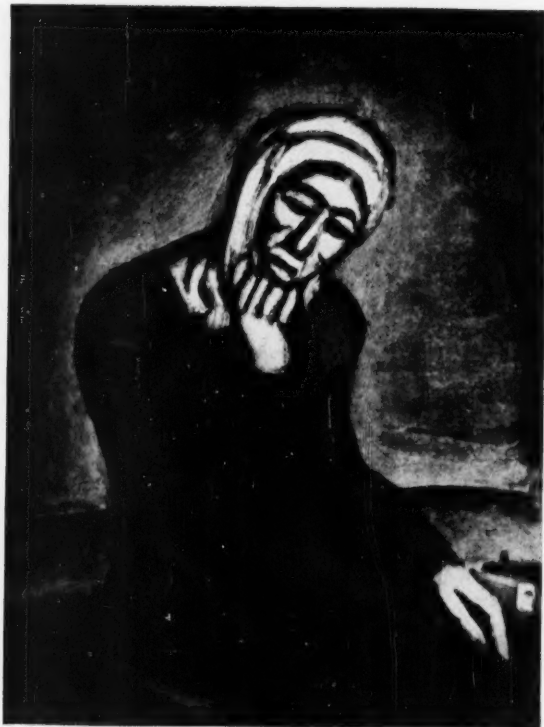
Fig. 21. Frank Lloyd Wright, Drawing of projected Irixe unit for Bagh House, Milwaukee, Wis., 1916 (from *The Life-work of . . . Frank Lloyd Wright*, Santpoort, 1925)

Fig. 20.  
Mayan breechclout ornament  
(from Morley, *The Ancient Maya*,  
London, 1946)



NOTES  
ON  
ROUAULT  
AS  
PRINTMAKER

*William S.  
Lieberman*



THE PAST SIX DECADES have witnessed an extraordinary revival of interest in printmaking. Never before have so many of the foremost painters and sculptors of any period devoted so much of their best energies to the creation of original prints. The graphic *oeuvre* of twentieth-century painters such as Beckmann, Chagall, Kirchner, Klee, Kokoschka, Matisse, Picasso and Villon is tremendous. But more than any other artist of today, the reputation of Georges Rouault rests as firmly upon his production as a printmaker as upon his achievement as a painter.

With the possible exception of one or two lithographs in black and white, Rouault's first

ault made what is perhaps his earliest etching—a menu design for a dinner organized in 1910 by former students of Moreau.

In the 1890's color lithography was in its heyday. It was a period of activity in lithography not again equaled in France until after the Second World War. By 1900 Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard and Vuillard had completed a brilliant succession of prints and posters. Somewhat later, in 1910, the younger Rouault also tried his hand at color lithography. His first experiment, a tentative yet forceful study of horses and a rider, is conceived pictorially in terms of painting rather than of lithography. The *Horseman* is closely related to a



Three unpublished plates for *Miserere*,  
etching and aquatint over heliogravure,  
Museum of Modern Art

1. *Old Woman*, 1927, 24 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ "
2. *Benediction*, 1927 (?), 24 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ "
3. *Lady*, 1927 (?), 24 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

printed work seems to date from 1910. He had not yet reached forty; his revered teacher, Gustave Moreau, had died a dozen years before; and Rouault had already formulated the expressionist style, the personal iconography, on which his subsequent painting is based.

In the spring of 1904 Rouault met Léon Bloy, the French Catholic author who so profoundly confirmed the direction of his art. Although Bloy neither appreciated nor understood the work of his friend, he himself had been an amateur etcher. Possibly it was Bloy who encouraged Rouault's first efforts in intaglio. It was as a tribute to Gustave Moreau, however, that Rou-

ault made what is perhaps his earliest etching—a menu design for a dinner organized in 1910 by former students of Moreau. In the 1890's color lithography was in its heyday. It was a period of activity in lithography not again equaled in France until after the Second World War. By 1900 Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard and Vuillard had completed a brilliant succession of prints and posters. Somewhat later, in 1910, the younger Rouault also tried his hand at color lithography. His first experiment, a tentative yet forceful study of horses and a rider, is conceived pictorially in terms of painting rather than of lithography. The *Horseman* is closely related to a

few monotypes of the same year. These monotypes in oil, literally printed paintings, offered perhaps an easier solution than did lithography for printed work in color. The lines which Rouault incised into the vigorous brushwork of the monotype plates appear as white in the image printed on paper. The rare monotypes of 1910 exist chiefly in European private collections, although one of the most striking, a *Clown with Monkey*, is a recent gift to the Museum of Modern Art.



*Circle d'études dramatiques.* These studies, intended as programs or announcements, were never completed, and he did not seriously undertake lithography again until 1925.

The great body of Rouault's graphic work belongs to the decade of the 1920's. The insistent and motivating force behind its creation was the driving ambition of Ambroise Vollard. The Parisian publisher wished to become the greatest editor of de luxe editions the world had ever known. His fortune consisted in the quantity of paintings he had amassed by Renoir and Cézanne, as well as many works of Degas, Gauguin, van Gogh, Redon and early work by the most stellar attractions of today's School of Paris. Vollard was quick to recognize and encourage talent. He was even quicker to exploit it. It was as a publisher rather than as a picture dealer that Vollard hoped to be remembered by posterity. Unfortunately during his lifetime he probably profited more from the sale of paintings and sculpture than from his efforts as an editor.

Beginning in 1895 with a portfolio of color lithographs by Bonnard, Vollard continued to commission fine editions for the next forty-five years. Some of his publications are among the most splendid achievements of modern printing. At the time of his sudden death in 1939, however, his closets and cupboards were crammed with material commissioned (and usually completed) but never released to the art market. Indeed Vollard left more works unpublished than he had ever issued during his lifetime.

In 1917 Rouault signed a formal contract with Vollard. Vollard had met Rouault several years earlier and in 1913, it is said, purchased the entire contents of his studio. Although the publisher continued his activities as a picture dealer, after the first World War Rouault was the only artist whose work, current and future, he controlled in its entirety. Vollard had already begun to devote his activities almost exclusively to the production of fine prints and books. Much of the artistic energies of Rouault was channeled in the same direction. Their collaboration was one of the most productive in the history of printmaking. Rouault, however, constantly reworked and revised his prints. Vollard himself, certainly no less dilatory, was often a hard taskmaster. Rouault briefly—and vividly—describes their relationship as "a barbed wire entanglement."

It is difficult to establish the exact chronology of Rouault's illustrations for various projects initiated by Vollard. The first was *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu*, Vollard's sequel to the adventures of the monstrous character invented by Alfred Jarry in 1888. Various artists had been associated in visual presentations of *Ubu Roi* as conceived by Jarry—Bonnard, Sérusier and Maurice Denis as well as Jarry himself. Vollard continued the story of Ubu in volumes illustrated by Bonnard, Jean Puy and Rouault.

According to a statement by Vollard, Rouault began the illustrations for *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* in 1916. Two years later, from Saumur, the artist wrote that he was in the midst of work on the plates. He described himself as "placing his stamp and seal on copper *subtil et sonore*." He also, with admiration and envy, evoked Rembrandt who was able to create so much with so little.

The twenty-two etchings for *Les Réincarnations* present the first of many problems in any discussion of Rouault as a printmaker. Several small paintings from 1916-18 (and perhaps, though doubtful, even from 1913) offer more or less literal interpretations of Vollard's text. These paintings in tempera, gouache, pastel, watercolor and india ink, were reduced in size and mechanically transferred to copper plates. Rouault then reworked the compositions with etching, aquatint and roulette. By 1928 when the twenty-two etchings were finished, dated and signed, the plates had been so revised that the final states show no trace of the original heliogravure.

Vollard, characteristically prompt, waited until 1932 to issue the illustrations. Two editions were printed: a portfolio of the etchings, and the book with Vollard's text as well as some one hundred wood engravings by Georges Aubert after designs by Rouault.

As early as 1918 the artist contemplated other projects to be published by Vollard. In a letter dated 1918, he speaks of "etchings in black or in colors—for *Les Fleurs du mal*, *Cirque de L'étoile filante*, *Passion*—and also the large copper plates which, like Penelope's shroud, I am in the midst of beginning again for *Faubourg de la longue peine*, *Ténèbres*, *Guerre*, *Miserere*."

The last four series of large copper plates, described by Rouault as Penelope's shroud, were to become the fifty-eight etchings and aquatints published exactly thirty years later as *Miserere*. Although at first occasional trial proofs are designated in Rouault's writing as belonging to *Faubourg de la longue peine* or *Ténèbres*, the project was soon reduced from four to two portfolios, *Guerre* and *Miserere*. The two albums were to contain approximately fifty plates each, and André Suarès was asked to contribute essays. Even two portfolios, proved too ambitious. Suarès, a close friend of the artist and publisher, never wrote the text. In addition, Rouault so departed from the original plan as envisioned by himself and Vollard that in all only about sixty-five plates were ever completed. Rouault's assignment of individual plates to *Guerre* or *Miserere* changed constantly. Many trial proofs contain elaborate captions, and for the same etching Rouault composed as many as four different titles. These revisions are also reflected in alternate designations to *Guerre* and *Miserere*. The definitive edition of 1948 is called simply *Miserere*. It contains fifty-eight plates, including both frontispieces for the two portfolios



*Two plates from  
Les Fleurs du Mal,  
etching and aquatint  
over heliogravure,  
collection  
Nelson A. Rockefeller,  
New York*

**Bride and Groom,  
1926, 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ "**



**Female Skeleton,  
1927, 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ "**

originally envisioned as separate publications.

*Miserere* is Rouault's finest single achievement either as a painter or as a printmaker. It is first of all a human document, a visual presentation of a spiritual conviction which assumes the fundamental truth of art. It exposes war and exploitation. It also offers an eloquent defense of the innate goodness of the common man, overburdened by injustice and misery. If the etchings and aquatints echo the moral indignation of Léon Bloy, they also emphasize again and again the artist's own deep belief in justice, pity and faith.

Monroe Wheeler, who presented the first comprehensive survey of Rouault's graphic work at the Museum of Modern Art in 1938, has written: "Nothing could possibly be more baffling to the amateur of prints than to define the means by which the *Miserere* et *Guerre* series was executed." Rouault, in his preface to the published edition of 1948, describes his procedure: "The greater number of these subjects date from 1914 to 1918. They were first executed in the form of drawings in india ink, and later transformed into paintings in accordance with the wishes of Ambroise Vollard. He then had all the subjects transferred on to copper. It was desirable, apparently, that the copper should first receive the impression of my drawing. From that point on, I painstakingly tried to preserve the initial rhythm and draftsmanship.

"On each plate, more or less felicitously, without ceasing or pausing, I worked with different tools; there is no secret about my methods. Never satisfied, I resumed each subject endlessly, sometimes in as many as twelve or fifteen successive states; I should have liked them all to be of equal quality. I readily admit that I became attached to them and was not insensitive to the desire of an American ambassador [Bullitt] who wished to have some of the copper plates plated with gold and set in the wall in the embassy."

The heliogravure plates reproduced paintings as well as drawings. Rouault completely transformed the plates with roulette, scraper, rasp, emory boards, sandpaper, drypoint, aquatint and etching acid applied with a brush. In short, he used almost anything at hand. Unlike *Les Réincarnations*, traces of the original heliogravure remain to enrich further the already varied textures of black and white.

Each composition for the *Miserere* bears a date from 1922 through 1927, and the series was completed before the final illustrations for *Les Réincarnations*. The plates for *Miserere*, as issued in 1948, were printed before 1930. Subsequent states of the same plates are not only reworked but often bear the date 1930. Rouault loathes to relinquish a work or to declare it finished. Just as with his paintings, he has constantly changed his prints. The later states of the *Miserere*, however, which have never been formally issued, are almost consistently inferior to those of the earlier but

definitive edition. In general they add only pretty embellishment to the sacrifice of much of the drama of the published version. One last detail further complicates a discussion of the *Miserere*. The official edition of 1948 omits several plates originally intended for *Guerre* or *Miserere*. The reasons for their exclusion are not clear. Three of these compositions are reproduced here.

While still at work on the *Miserere*, and before the etchings for *Les Réincarnations* had been completed, Rouault began illustrations for a projected edition of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*. Once again paintings were mechanically transferred to copper plates. This first series of illustrations to Baudelaire consists of about a dozen compositions dated 1926 and 1927. Since the plates are much less reworked than the *Miserere* or *Les Réincarnations*, untouched areas of heliogravure appear much more clearly. The project was abandoned—possibly because an earlier (1905) Vollard edition of Baudelaire's poems, illustrated by Emile Bernard and reissued in 1916, had not been sold.

In 1936 Rouault, in close collaboration with the master printer Roger Lacourrière, began a second series of plates for *Les Fleurs du mal*: twelve etchings and aquatints, this time in color. This second project, only occasionally related to the first, was completed by 1939 when Vollard designed and printed a title page. Unfortunately the second series also remains unpublished.

In addition to the intaglio plates for *Les Réincarnations*, *Miserere* and *Les Fleurs du mal*, Rouault between 1925 and 1927 composed about thirty lithographs for E. Frapier, another Parisian publisher. Vollard must have given his consent to the arrangement, but Rouault's relations with Frapier were no more satisfactory than with Vollard. The artist has referred to Frapier as "the little *estampeur*"—a pun on *estampe* and the argot for "pilferer." The lithographs, drawn directly on the stone by Rouault, were printed by Auguste Clot, whom the artist addressed as "*beau-clot-litho*." The Frapier lithographs were printed in from three to four successive states. At least three to five final proofs were issued for each progressive state, and the final printing consisted of generally thirty-five examples. As a group the Frapier lithographs are perhaps the least known of any of Rouault's prints. The two series *Démagogie* and *Cirque Forain* each contain about eight prints: the first is a political commentary, the second offers intimate glimpses of circus folk. A Frapier catalogue of 1926 also mentions a series *Pitreseries*. The most interesting of the Frapier lithographs is a small gallery of portraits: two of Rouault himself, two of Moreau, and one each of J. K. Huysmans, André Suarès, Bloy and Baudelaire, the four authors whom Rouault most revered. Six of these portraits were gathered as illustrations for a volume of reminiscences by Rouault, *Souvenirs intimes*, also published by Frapier in 1926.



The Ass: "Full hands to the innocents. We shall all be wise," 1924-26, lithograph, trial proof, 2nd state, 12 1/2 x 8 3/4", from *Démagogie*, gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to Museum of Modern Art

In 1929 the Editions Quatre Chemins published a lithograph self-portrait by Rouault in color, and an album of six lithographs, *Petite banlieue*, a somewhat romantic exploration of a dingy Parisian suburb. Some of Rouault's poems, collected as *Paysages légendaires*, were published in the same year with six lithographs and reproductions of fifty drawings; and in 1931 Marcel Arland's *Les Carnets de Gilbert* appeared with one lithograph and facsimiles of eight gouaches.

Although Vollard permitted Rouault these commissions from other publishers, it was usually because Vollard himself was occupied with other ventures. In 1930, however, Rouault began again various projects for Vollard: *Le Cirque* (completed in 1930 but still unpublished); *Le Cirque de l'étoile filante* (1934-35, published in 1938); *Passion* (1935-36, published in 1939); and the second *Les Fleurs du mal* (1936-38, unpublished). Three of these books Rouault and Vollard had contemplated as early as 1918. The illustra-



Parade, 1924-27, lithograph, 2nd stone, 4th state, 12 1/4 x 9", from *Cirque* Forain, Museum of Modern Art





Charles Baudelaire, c. 1926, lithograph, 10½ x 6½",  
gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.  
to Museum of Modern Art

ation. Not until 1947 did Rouault succeed in regaining possession of some of the stockpiles of his unpublished prints and books. *Miserere*, under the artist's direction, appeared in 1948. *Le Cirque*, *Les Fleurs du mal* and many individual prints still remain unpublished. Partial editions, however, printed during Vollard's lifetime, have been distributed by various European dealers since the end of the second World War.

The association of the artist and publisher had been tremendously productive. But it had been a stormy, often hostile, marriage. Rouault has said: "There were dark hours when I doubted I should ever see publication. If injustice has been shown Ambroise Vollard, let us agree that he had taste and a keen desire to make beautiful books without breaking any speed records, but it would have taken three centuries to bring to perfection the various works and paintings with which, in utter disregard of earthly limitations, he wished to burden the pilgrim."

**Note:** All illustrations are from the Georges Rouault Exhibition, previously shown at the Cleveland Museum of Art and currently on view through May 31st at the Museum of Modern Art.

tions for each consists of from seven to seventeen etchings and acquints in color as well as many wood engravings (by Georges Aubert) in black and white. Rouault himself composed the text for *Le Cirque de l'étoile filante*; André Suarès contributed to *Le Cirque* and the *Passion*. The color etchings were made by Roger Lacourière after gouaches by Rouault. The artist carefully supervised the production of the plates. Lacourière worked on the red, yellow and blue separations; the artist himself perhaps on the key black plate. Photomechanical transfers may have been used, but the process employed differs from the heliogravure plates of the previous decade.

Rouault also drew a few large lithographs for Vollard, of which the most striking are portraits of Verlaine and Hindenburg. The large color etchings of the late 1930's, so often attributed to Rouault, were actually executed by Lacourière.

Vollard's death in an automobile accident in July 1939 did not terminate their long associ-

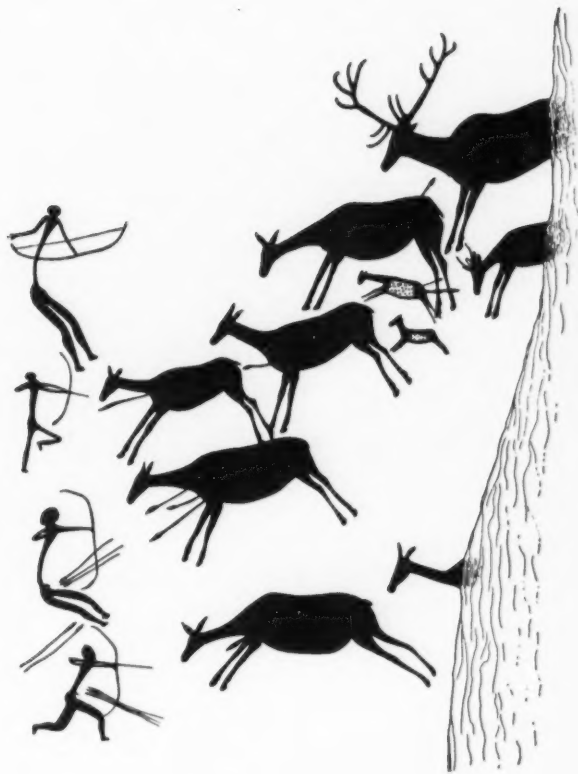
Paul Verlaine, 1933, lithograph, 16¼ x 12¼",  
gift of the artist to Museum of Modern Art





# ART IN THE OLD STONE AGE

*Miles C. Burkitt*



ONE of the purposes of this article is to put forward the plea that the artists, art lovers and art critics of today should take a much greater interest than they would seem to have done hitherto in the works of their predecessors of the Old Stone Age. For these are not only interesting from the point of view of their very great antiquity, dating as they do in all probability to a time between 20,000 and 10,000 years B.C., but the problems of their production, the different techniques used and the various "styles" found should be of even greater interest to the art critic than to the prehistorian. Certainly the former would have a great contribution to make to the studies of the latter, and I can envisage enormous possibilities in such a collaboration. Especially is this true in the case of the early line engravings and paintings, for any two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional object necessarily involves conventions of one kind or another, and such conventions must interest the artist as well as the man of science.

As everyone knows, the late Upper Paleolithic art includes engraved and sculptured stones and bones and sculptured friezes which are found in the prehistoric home sites associ-

ated with the stone industries and with the bones of the animals—many of them now extinct—that had been used for food by the artists; and also, as well as this so-called "home art," the paintings and engravings and modelings found on the walls and in the passages of caves, sometimes deep in the heart of the hills. These painted caves were not home sites, but were more in the nature of temples where sympathetic magic rites were performed to ensure successful hunting—a vital necessity for a folk who had not yet realized the possibilities of agriculture or the domestication of animals.

One sometimes comes upon the expression "cave man's art" or "the cave art." But this is actually a simplification. No art exists apart from the culture which engenders it. Every form of art is an expression of the culture of its creators. As more than one culture in late Paleolithic times had artistic ability, there is more than one cycle of art in the late Old Stone Age. Actually there are two principal cycles named after the two im-

Above: Hunting scene, rock painting, Late Paleolithic (?), c. 17" high, Vallarta Gorge near Castellón de la Plana, Eastern Spain (from Obermaier and Kuhn, *Bushman Art*, London, 1930)

portant cultures, the Aurignacian and the Magdalenian. Just as a culture is born, grows up, ages and dies, so the art of which it is an expression evolves, flourishes, withers and disappears. But even as the culture not infrequently gives birth by contact to other cultural developments, so its particular form of art influences other art cycles in process of development. These art cycles, even in the remote past, do not follow absolutely parallel lines of development but do have certain similarities which can be demonstrated.

Towards the end of the last century there was a well-known French prehistorian named Piette. He made a number of explorations in Paleolithic home sites, especially in the Pyrenees region. He always claimed that sculpture must, and actually did, precede any kind of line engraving—that it was natural to suppose that a representation of a three-dimensional object would first be attempted by an exact copy of it in three dimensions. It is true that sculpture is commoner at the beginning of an art cycle, but it is not true to say that simple line engraving did not also occur from the start. This is very interesting, because today a number of modern primitive peoples find great difficulty in interpreting a picture of a solid object. I remember a story which my grandfather used to relate of a Druse Sheik in the Lebanon. He was showing him one day a somewhat crude oleograph of an immensely ugly toad squatting under a toadstool. The poor Druse was entirely flummoxed by these patches of color and turned the picture around in all directions. Suddenly he understood, "It's an Englishman sitting under an umbrella!"

In Upper Paleolithic times, the first engravings were on pieces of bone (or on the cave walls) and consist of a simple outline of the animal, figured as if the shadow could have been projected on the "canvas" and a line drawn around it with burin or paint brush. As a rule only two legs are shown, and, interestingly enough, any horns of the animal might generally be represented "full-face," while the eye is frequently omitted. Yet in spite of the great simplicity of treatment and the absolute economy of line, the results are often surprisingly vigorous. In the case of the Aurignacian art a very interesting development follows. The line is no longer continuous but frequently broken and composed of small dashes inclined at an angle to the main direction of the outline. An attempt at perspective is introduced, and the animal is given its proper complement of legs. The animals are alive, and there is a tremendous sense of movement. But the technical skill is far inferior to the development that we can trace in the later, Magdalenian art cycle, where we find engravings drawn in a manner that would need an expert draftsman of today to emulate.

Equally in the case of the paintings in the caves, developments can be traced from the sim-

ple outline drawing through more complicated outline figures and flat-wash to a simple bichrome style in the case of the Aurignacian cycle, and in the Magdalenian, through stump drawing, where a sense of relief is obtained by an attempt at shading, up to the well-known magnificent naturalistic polychrome paintings such as one finds on the ceiling at Altamira.

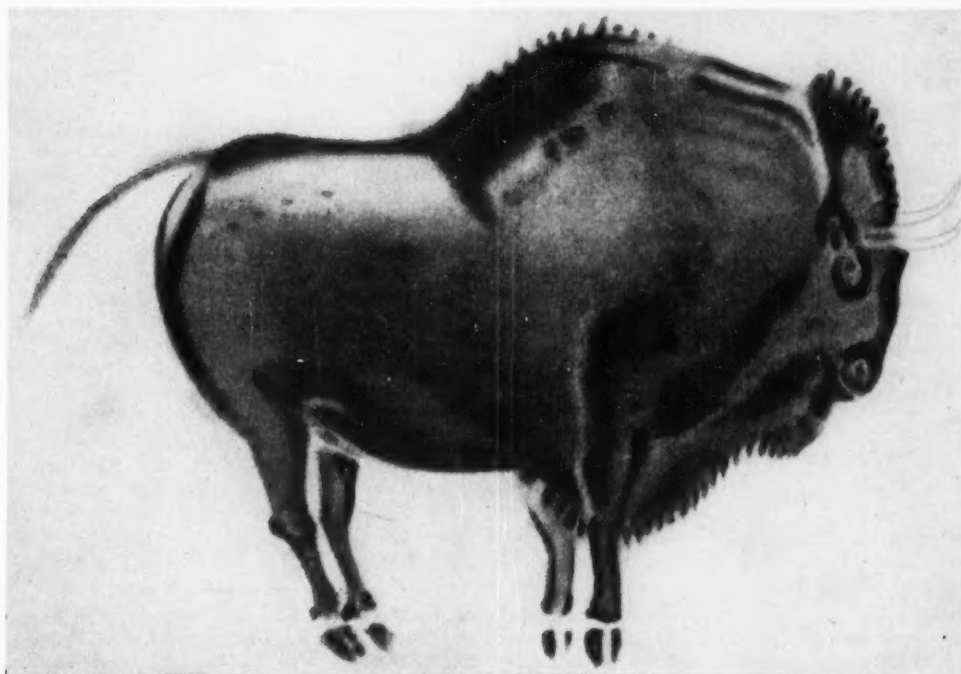
A very interesting comparison may be made between the paintings and engravings in the newly discovered cave of Lascaux, some thirty miles upstream from Les Eyzies in the department of the Dordogne in France, and those in the cave of Altamira not far from Torrelavega, a small town to the south of Santander on the north coast of Spain. The former seems to have been a magic sanctuary for Aurignacian folk and to have been blocked up, probably by some small natural landslide, at the end of Aurignacian times. Between that very remote period and its discovery by some boys during the recent war, nothing had happened to disturb the paintings, which were found to be in a marvelously preserved condition. Altamira, the entrance to which had also been blocked, was discovered only during the last century when a fox which had gone to earth was being dug out and the cave behind exposed. Altamira is *par excellence* the classic site where the Magdalenian art can be seen at its best, and its polychrome paintings have long been the wonder and admiration of everyone who has seen them or even their reproductions. A comparison between the art of these two caves makes an interesting study. Several different styles exist at both sites, but taking it in each case at its full maturity a number of general distinctions can be made. The later Magdalenian artist had more skill. He had more power with the brush; he had an ability to represent character in the animals. The various bison painted are not by any means just bison as such. There are bison who are kindly; there are others who seem to me to be definitely the reverse! This ability to get behind a naturalistic representation of the envelope of the animal, as it were, and get to the real beast within, surely indicates the possession of sensitive qualities of a high order, yet Magdalenian man, the first animal portrait painter, forerunner of Landseer perhaps—or is that unkind to the cave artist?—flourished some ten thousand years or more ago!

But these animals at Altamira, marvelous as they are, are static: they do not move. Even the so-called "galloping boar" does not really seem to annihilate distance. It is quite a good representation of a galloping pig, but it is caught, as it were, in a moment of galloping and has remained so, frozen ever since. It reminds me of some of our less successful national equestrian statues! At Lascaux, on the other hand, the earlier Aurignacian art shows none of the finish, and less of the technical skill and attention to

Head and forepart of red deer, cave painting, Aurignacian, 55" high, from Lascaux, France (from Windels, *The Lascaux Cave Paintings*, London, 1949)



Bison, polychrome cave painting, Magdalenian, Altamira, Spain (from *Eidos*, Vol. 1, May-June, 1950)



detail that we find in the later art cycle. The Aurignacian artist is far less completely representational than his successors, and while the character of each animal species is clearly given, one stands in front of a painting and says, "Oh, another magnificent ox," but not "Oh, what a malicious one this is!" There is little or no delineation of character behind the mere representation of the species. On the other hand the paintings are alive, dynamic, moving. The cave is not big, and quite frankly, after a time one is almost giddy-fatigued with turning to get out of the way of one enormous, oncoming beast only to find oneself confronted by another advancing nearer still! The horses are trotting, the cattle are pounding around the central chamber, in one case the stags even seem to be swimming. Everything has vigor and movement and a sort of sense of urgency. Of course it may be argued that account must be taken of the individual painter or painters of Lascaux and Altamira, that it is unscientific from so few examples to diagnose artistic characteristics in a culture and to distinguish in this way between the Aurignacians and the Magdalenians. While we have plenty of other examples besides Altamira for the Magdalenian art at its best—and I may say they confirm the impression obtained at Altamira itself—only Lascaux has so far given us a large corpus of Aurignacian paintings and engravings. Possibly, then, it would be wise to wait a little for further confirmation before doing more than putting forward an hypothesis; but the problem is surely one that should demand the attention of art critics. If the distinctions I have suggested are found to hold water, it would seem that perhaps these two very ancient cultures did possess dissimilar esthetic standards and abilities. This is a thought which may bring us nearer to an understanding of them as human beings.

The cave paintings are, many of them, open to the public and are visited each year by numberless tourists. Most of them have been published, but while the published work can be of great use, one must always remember the personal equation of the copyist. Fine nuances that a man who paints himself would appreciate may have been unconsciously damped down or other characteristics unduly stressed—another reason why the prehistorian would welcome the help of the art critic. But a mere rapid visit to the caves would not be sufficient, except in a few instances of which, at the moment, Lascaux is one. A study of the paintings and engravings *in situ* does involve some expenditure of time and trouble. The eye has to become accustomed to seeing drawings that are often wholly or partially weathered and to disentangling the numerous superpositions that occur—often forming veritable palimpsests. But I am always hoping that some day some artist will take up this task and will attempt a study of these fascinating art cycles,

and give us his opinions on the paintings and engravings from the artist's point of view. The chief person, so far as I know, who did make a tentative attempt, and it was only a very small beginning, was the late Roger Fry, but I never heard that he had himself visited the caves.

When we consider more closely the examples of the home art we also find differences between the Aurignacian developments and those of Magdalenian times, and there are a number of different styles and methods of making the engravings. Doubtless besides the sculptures, reliefs and engravings that are found, there was originally painting too, but this has almost entirely disappeared, and one could hardly have hoped for its survival. The objects at the home sites are found buried in the ground and have therefore been more or less subject to the action of humic acids and other deleterious forms of weathering. The marvel is that so many lovely things have indeed survived. As already stated, the earliest engravings are always of a very simple nature, and the same may be said of the sculptures, but in both cycles development is rapid. At one stage in the Magdalenian cycle the artists almost invariably associated sculpture in low relief with line engraving, producing most pleasing results. At a slightly later date in the same cycle we get pure line engraving of first-class excellence. I possess a little engraving of a reindeer turning its head over its shoulder (which comes from Laugerie Basse, a rock shelter home near Les Eyzies) that is a sheer delight and of incomparable quality.

Towards the end of both art cycles, but more particularly in that of Magdalenian man, we find an ever-increasing number of conventionalizations, "suggestion pictures" and patterns. By conventionalization the prehistorian means the representation of a natural object ideographically. Let us take, for example, a horse's head viewed full-face. In the heyday of the Magdalenian art, an attempt would have been made to represent this far from simple subject in a purely naturalistic manner. Later when conventionalization sets in, certain characteristic features are seized upon, such as the length of the head and the fact of a mane sticking up between the two ears. These features are progressively simplified till the final stage of the picture is just a straight line from which, just below the top on either side of it, project two other short lines at an angle. Thus we have length, the two ears and the little bit of mane showing between them—that is to say, a representation of a horse's head! In the case of an ox there is no mane but two horns, and, as before, length is supplied by a single line from the very top of which, on either side, there project symmetrically two pairs of short lines, one pair for the ears and the other for the horns. There is an amusing case of a fish. The conventionalization had finally been reduced to two



Red horse, cave painting, Magdalenian, Altamira, Spain (from Raphael, *Prehistoric Cave Paintings*, New York, 1945)



Black bull, detail, Aurignacian cave painting, Lascaux, France (from Windels, *The Lascaux Cave Paintings*, London, 1949)





*Upright bison with vative offerings, cave painting, Magdalenian, Niaux, France (from Raphael, Prehistoric Cave Paintings, N. Y. 1945)*

shallow curves facing each other horizontally, with a dot at one end for the eye. In later times some unknown artist with a more naturalistic bent came upon such a figure and felt that it might well represent a fish. He therefore added a tail, but as he had imperfectly understood the conventionalization he put on the tail at the eye end! Numberless representations in this simplified schematic form of natural objects are known, and the whole forms an extremely interesting study. Of course conventionalization is not confined to Paleolithic times. It occurs at all periods and among peoples of many stages of culture. The classic study of it was made in connection with some New Guinea basketwork. But it is interesting to find it at such an early period, and also interesting to note that conventionalization seems to occur only at the end of an art cycle and goes with a certain sophistication in the art itself. To some extent it would seem to be the forerunner of the end of the particular art cycle concerned.

The suggestion pictures are much fewer in number and are quite another story. A classic example was found at the rock shelter of Mège at Teyjat, in the south of France. The artist had as his canvas a piece of bone some four inches long, on which he wished to depict a herd of reindeer. He accomplished this by rapidly but accurately giving us two or three small figures of reindeer in the front of his group and one in the rear, and filling in the intervening space with a veritable forest of antlers. By this device he gave us the indication of herd but not of an actual number of animals.

The much later Bronze Age Minoans at Knossos in Crete were once confronted with the

same problem when they wished to depict a crowd in a painting of a bull-fight with an audience watching, but in this case the audience consists of a number of people who can be counted. I forget the exact number—is it fifty-four?—but no doubt as many individuals as there was room for! This is very different from the concept "herd" given us by the Magdalenian artist. Of course, I am prepared to agree that the Magdalenian may have been making his drawing for a specific purpose. He may well have wished to convey a message. We may indeed, as is true, too, of some of the conventionalizations, be observing the start of some very simple kind of writing, but that does not alter the fact that he was thus able to suggest to us the concept of a large but indefinite number of beasts and not merely to draw as many as he could of separate individuals. And I must remind you again that he lived ten thousand and more years ago; that he wore skins, not woven clothes; that he ate only what he could find or slay, having no domestic animals and no crops of his own sowing to store or anything to store them in if he had had them; that he had no pottery to drink out of, so that unless he used shells or broken pieces of skull, he must have drunk at streams like an animal—in fact that he was without any of the refinements of his successors of the Neolithic or New Stone Age.

The pure patterns are also for the most part a feature of the end of the Magdalenian cycle in the home art. They consist of zigzags, sometimes broken by vertical lines, horizontal lines with little depressions at intervals, circles with radii, occasional concentric circles and



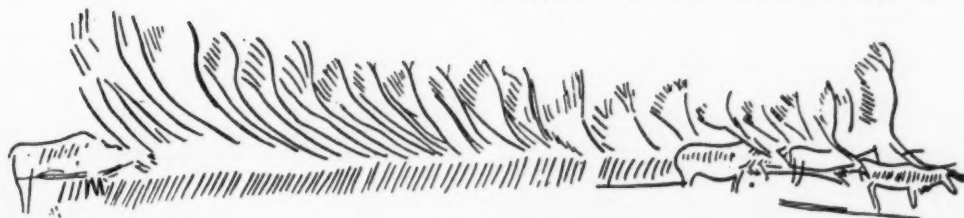
General view of animals decorating ceiling, cave painting, Magdalenian, 551" long, Altamira, Spain

spirals, etc. It is interesting to note that different patterns seem to occur at different moments in the development of the art cycle. One is almost tempted to use the word "fashion" in this connection. So much is this the case that when a decorated bone is under discussion, one can frequently assign it to its proper horizon in the evolution of the culture on stylistic grounds, from a knowledge of the particular patterns that it displays. It must not be thought that any complicated figures were evolved, neither are the various simple patterns grouped together into more complicated subjects. But whether they had any meaning or not, it does seem that Magdalenian man, at various stages of his development, preferred one to another.

In this short article we have been touching on a very big question, and there is much that I should have liked to have included but for which space is inadequate, and which might have

disturbed the balance. My object has been mainly to attempt to interest the reader who is personally primarily concerned with art in a fascinating branch of his subject, which up to the present has been mainly studied by archeological savants who deal with the whole story of prehistoric man and are only incidentally concerned with his skill as an artist, and who in any case are not necessarily competent to assess it and its implications. I feel strongly that a close study of these sculptures, drawings and paintings, whether in the home art or in the cave art, would richly reward the art-critic investigator. It could not be done in a moment; it would require a serious study of the subject, some of it at any rate in the field—and in lovely parts of the world indeed—but the results, I am convinced, would be of great interest both to the archeologist and the art lover—indeed to all sensitive people who are concerned with the origins of things.

Herd of reindeer, engraving on bone, Late Magdalenian, c. 4" long, from Mège at Teyjat, South France (from Eidos, Vol. 1, May-June, 1950)



**FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT continued**

in relief in the final version of the frieze, constitute a peculiarly Mayan motive that appears in the façade of the arch of Labna, of which a full-size cast was exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair together with two sections of the Nunnery at Uxmal that provided other parallels mentioned above. Similar arrangements of blocks or squares are found in the frieze of the Palace of the Governor at Uxmal, and even in Andean textiles. The secondary unit in the projected frieze for the Bogk House as shown in the drawing was intended to alternate with the major unit but was omitted in the executed version, as were other details, presumably in order to simplify the process of casting. But as in the major unit, the geometrically treated head and its surrounding details also echo variant motives of Mayan sculptured decoration.

Several other details in the work of Wright down to the most recent reveal in a number of ways the influence of Mayan esthetic principles or details, but the above will suffice as representative examples. Only one detail might be mentioned because it assumed an emblematic function in the architect's recent career. It is the large isolated dual rectangular volute that appears twice at the entrance of Taliesin West, on the title page of the recent edition of the architect's *Autobiography*, and on the two companion books each dedicated to his writings and his works, and even on the seal printed on letterheads and envelopes sent from the two Taliesins (fig. 23). This motive is one of the most prominent details in Pre-Columbian art, appearing in this isolated form and with slight variations in many buildings and minor arts

(fig. 22). Since this volute has been used in the publications as the complement or equivalent of the red square which had been for most of Wright's professional career his emblematic signature, the merging of the two emblems suggests a sort of identification of Wright with the great aboriginal American architects. This is hardly a wild guess on the writer's part. During a recent trip to Taliesin East, he and his companions saw, prominently displayed on an easel a volume of plates on Mayan architecture. The topmost one featured a reconstruction of the serpent pier from the Temple of the Tigers at Chichén Itzá—a demonstration of Wright's continuing interest in Mayan architecture, and a reminder to disciple and visitor of the aboriginal fundamentals of American architecture. Still another incident conveys even more effectively Mr. Wright's identification of himself with the Pre-Columbian past. About three years ago a well-known modern architect visited Wright at Taliesin West. After the host had taken his guest around, explaining all the features and qualities of the structure, he asked rhetorically if it was not better than the Mayans would have done.

I hope that I have been able in the foregoing to substantiate my belief that Frank Lloyd Wright was first introduced to the Japanese and to Pre-Columbian art at the World's Fair in Chicago. If true, it was indeed a good omen and a fortunate event that on the four-hundredth anniversary celebration of the discovery of America, a great segment of native Pre-Columbian American art should have been rediscovered by the greatest architect of modern America and, through his utilization of its motives, been given a new lease on life.

Fig. 22. Façade of House of the Governor, Uxmal, Mexico, detail (from John L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, London, 1841)

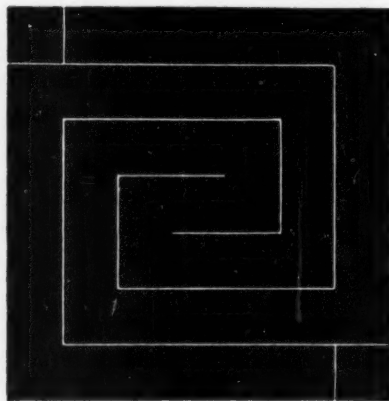


Fig. 23. Emblem of Frank Lloyd Wright

## Contributors

STELLA MARY PEARCE (Mrs. Eric Newton) is lecturer on the history of costume on the panel of the Extra-Mural Board at Cambridge. She collected and arranged the British section of the International Exhibition of Costume held at Venice last fall, and is at present preparing a book on an approach to the study of the costume of the Italian renaissance.

A long-standing friend of Charles Howard, DOUGLAS MACAGY has written articles on his earlier work and owns several of his paintings. Mr. MacAgay is now engaged in coordinating plans for the Museum of Modern Art's twenty-fifth anniversary program, to be initiated in the fall of 1954.

DIMITRI TSELOS is professor of the history of art at the University of Minnesota. He has published articles on early, medieval illuminated manuscripts, modern painting and modern architecture in the *Art Bulletin* and other periodicals. His major interest in recent years has been in the sources of modern art.

WILLIAM S. LIEBERMAN of the Museum of Modern Art, who is responsible for the print section of the Rouault exhibition now current there, has recently published *The Sculptor's Studio: Etchings by Picasso*, issued by the Museum, and *Picasso—Blue and Rose Periods* (Harry S. Abrams, 1953). He is now preparing an exhibition of the graphic work of Jacques Villon, which will open at the end of the summer.

The article by MILES C. BURKITT is reprinted by kind permission of the editors from the suspended British publication *Eidos* (April-May, 1950). Mr. Burkitt, now university lecturer at Cambridge in the faculty of archeology and anthropology, has done extensive field work in Spain, North Russia and South Africa. He is the author of numerous publications, including *The Old Stone Age* and, in collaboration with l'Abbé Breuil, *Rock Paintings of Southern Andalusia*.

## Forthcoming

The May issue will contain "Antoni Gaudi" by JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY; W. G. CONSTABLE, "The Birth of Modern Painting as Exemplified in Landscape"; GEORGE L. K. MORRIS, "European Whistle-Stops"; ERNESTO ROGERS, "Max Bill"; and JUSTINE M. CORDWELL, "Naturalism and Stylization in Yoruba Art."

## Film Review

*Visit to Picasso*, produced by "Art et Cinéma"; written and directed by Paul Haesaerts, photographed by Jean Lehérissey, commentary spoken by Frank Silvera; music by André Souris and Pierre Froidebise. 35 mm; black and white; sound; 2 reels (22 min.). Distributed by Joseph Burstyn, Inc., 113 West 42nd Street, New York 36. Apply for rates.

Winner of awards at the Venice Film Festival in 1950 and at Woodstock in 1951, *Visit to Picasso* has at last been released for general showing to American audiences. It is a pleasure to report that this really is a superior art film—and not only relative to the mediocre level of quality that obtains in the genre. Its distributor is also to be congratulated for the English commentary, which shows both tact and taste: it is pitched at an adult level, it is spoken with simplicity, and above all it is refreshingly sparse. *Visit to Picasso* is allowed to make its statement in primarily visual terms—and how ironic it is that this, which should be a *sine qua non*, is exceptional enough to call for remark!

The title is well chosen, for this film is most memorable as an interview with the artist at his Vallauris studio. There is, however, no dialogue. Instead Picasso, facing his audience through a large sheet of plexiglass, paints on it with broad strokes of white pigment. The virtue of this scheme is not that we see Picasso "paint a picture" (in the sense that Campaux' *Henri Matisse*, for example, showed us that artist at work on the *Rumanian Blouse*), nor is it, assuredly, in the inherent quality of what he produces, considered as works of art. But this inventive, essentially cinematic device (well adaptable to television) gives us an unobstructed view of an extraordinarily photogenic personage—his gaze now intensely concentrated, now puckish—and allows us to follow his hand as it hesitates before a stroke or moves in confident sweeps. Perhaps it is only a trick, but it makes good theatre. It holds us spellbound, as the artist, too, seems absorbed by his own magician's power of evoking upon the clear, shiny surface images that only a moment before had no existence save in his mind's eye.

The happiest rapport seems to have been established between Picasso and Paul Haesaerts, the gifted Belgian art historian turned film maker. This results in uninhibited insights into the artist's lively personality and wit; apparently he thoroughly enjoyed the making of this film.

The introductory survey of his development is too brief to be satisfactory. *Visit to Picasso* succeeds, however, in conveying some sense of the master's protean styles, of his swings between nature and deformation and of his constant recasting of certain basic themes into whatever mode he is currently employing. Two especially illuminating series of dissolves show,

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first, the evolution of representations of a bull from naturalism to the most drastic simplification; then, by contrast, the head of a girl is taken back to realism, through various stages of distortion. Least satisfactory, perhaps, is the presentation of *Guernica*—the only sequence to succumb to that generic sin of art films, a rapid staccato of isolated snippets. To attempt to infuse *Guernica*, of all paintings, with additional excitement by any such artificial means is indeed to gild the lily.

HELEN M. FRANC

## Recent Art Film Releases

*Altar Masterpieces*, produced by Filmpolski, directed by S. Modzenski, photographed by S. Sprudin; English text by Waldo Salt, narrated by Morris Carnovsky; music by Andrzej Panufnik. 16 mm; black and white; sound; 20 min. Made on the occasion of the postwar repair and reassembling of the altar of St. Mary's at Cracow, masterpiece of the fifteenth-century sculptor, Veit Stoss. Available from Brandon Films, Inc., 300 West 57th Street, New York 19. Apply for rates.

*Form Evolution*, conceived and directed by Martin Metal, prepared with the cooperation of the San Francisco Museum of Art and the City College of San Francisco, photographed by Frank Stauffacher; music by Leonard Rosenman. Made to convey to art students some fundamental concepts of form, volume and motion in non-representational sculpture. 16 mm; color; sound; 13 min. Available from A.F. Films, 1600 Broadway, New York 19. Rental \$7.50; sale \$100.

"*Painter and Poet*" Series, produced for British Information Services by John Halas in association with Joan Maude and Michael Warre; photographed by W. Traylor and R. Turk, edited by Jack King, music by Matyas Seiber. 16 mm; black and white; sound. Contemporary British artists have produced, especially for these films, drawings or paintings to illustrate poems or songs. The eight subjects, ranging in length from 1½ to 11 minutes, include Kathleen Raine's *Pythonesse* illustrated by Henry Moore, *Twa Corbies* illustrated by Michael Rothenstein and Cowper's *John Gilpin* illustrated by Ronald Searle, may be rented or sold separately or as a complete series. Available from British Information Services, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20. Series price: rental \$5, sale \$100.

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## Book Reviews

Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Harvard University, 1952.  
xiii + 224 pp., 50 illus. \$4.

The strange breed that forms the subject of this volume has been unduly neglected by art historians, even though it plays a conspicuous and puzzling role in the art of the later middle ages. Some of its other aspects—and there are many—have been explored by students of folklore and mythology, but Dr. Bernheimer's book is the first monograph to deal with the elusive creatures in thorough and comprehensive fashion. Its subtitle, "a study in art, sentiment, and demonology," may serve to suggest, if not to circumscribe, the scope of his labors. As a nature demon out of the prehistoric past, the Wild Man has always led a marginal existence in Western civilization; yet the very fact of his survival in the face of every effort to erase his memory, and the variety of functions he could assume, casts a revealing light on the persistent primitive impulses in the mind of "civilized man." Dr. Bernheimer does full justice to these in his account of what he terms the "natural history" of the Wild Man, and frequently returns to the same theme in the later chapters, which are devoted to the mythological personality of our untamed *alter ego*, his theatrical embodiment, his role in medieval learning, his erotic connotations and his use in heraldry.

The entire book abounds with fascinating and instructive material, not only for the specialist in matters iconographic but for anyone interested in cultural history. How many of us, for instance, would spot the harlequin of modern times as a lineal descendant of the Wild Man, without Dr. Bernheimer's guidance? Who could guess that King Wenceslaus of Bohemia, in the years around 1400, had himself portrayed as a Wild Man because, contrary to custom, he was proud of being in love with his wife and wanted to celebrate this state of conjugal bliss? And who could explain how a troop of Wild Men came to replace the usual saints and prophets on the jambs of the main portal of S. Gregorio in Valladolid?

Perhaps these random samples will convey something of the far-ranging character of Dr. Bernheimer's study. There are, in fact, so many unexpected ramifications to the Wild Man theme that the reader has frequent cause to wish for a more detailed and leisurely account than the author was able to present within the physical limits of this book. Dr. Bernheimer, one feels,

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could well have used additional space for his text. A more generous allotment of illustrations—those provided are inadequate both in number and in quality—might have encouraged him to deal with the visual aspects of his material at greater length. Art historians are likely to encounter a number of problems which the author passes over too quickly or neglects to mention altogether. Thus we are told that the familiar image of the Wild Man emerged in the course of the thirteenth century, but we learn little about the date and locale of the earliest examples. Dr. Bernheimer suggests a link with the Silvanus of the ancients, without entering into the question of how the middle ages visualized this minor deity; yet the *vasque de Saint-Denis*, of c.1180, shows a Silvanus in the shape of a classical leaf mask that brings to mind the leafy type of Wild Man popular in the fifteenth century. Some aspects of the erotic role of the Wild Man, such as that represented in a print by Israel van Meckenem (reproduced as fig. 38—a group of nude Wild Men and Women climbing through foliage towards a gigantic blossom), might have been explored further as a possible clue to similar scenes in the central panel of Bosch's *Garden of Delight*. Nor do we find any reference to those strange-looking angels whose bodies are entirely covered with feathers, a type well known in the later middle ages, are they not the celestial counterparts of the Wild Man, as it were? The hairy Wild Man in the so-called "Satire on Caravaggio" attributed to Annibale Carracci may fall outside the limits of Dr. Bernheimer's book. Still, it would be interesting to know his opinion of this creature, described in the Farnese inventory of 1662 as "Hairy Harry" (*Arrigo Peloso*).

Questions such as these, however, in no way detract from the high merit of Dr. Bernheimer's achievement as a whole. They should be taken, rather, as a tribute to the thought-provoking powers of a work that ranks among the most brilliant and original iconographic studies to appear in recent years.

H. W. JANSON  
New York University

Werner Weisbach, *Vincent van Gogh: Kunst und Schicksal. Vol. I, Die Frühzeit*, Basel, Amerbach, 1949; *Vol. II, Künstlerische Aufstiege und Ende*, Basel, Benno Schwabe, 1951. 251 pp., 141 illus.

With the publication of the second volume, Werner Weisbach has completed his monograph on Vincent van Gogh, which is richly illustrated with well-chosen examples. The author's connoisseurship and scholarly achievements are too well known for us to expect anything less than a valuable contribution to the van Gogh literature. But more than that, this book is unique because it is based on the experience of an author whose span of life covers the entire period from the time van Gogh's name first became known to only a small group of admirers up to the present day of his glory. Impressed by some of the earliest exhibitions of van Gogh's work in the 1890's, the author called attention to the artist in his *History of Impressionism through the Ages*, published in 1911. While at that time he sympathized with the painter, the author felt too close to his subject and therefore was inclined to leave the judgment of van Gogh's intrinsic qualities to the future. Now, forty years later, and with his interest undiminished, the author has treated the subject on a broad basis and in a highly stimulating fashion which should have appeal for students as well as for amateurs.

Weisbach was fortunate enough to have been well acquainted with a number of persons who had met van Gogh or had been his relatives. With such intimate knowledge as a background, he has culled wisely from the enormous published literature, as well as from van Gogh's letters, always used as firsthand authority. Such efforts have resulted in a most readable story of van Gogh's life and a convincing interpretation of his art. What gives dynamic force to this book is the fact that Weisbach has seen practically every picture he discusses and knows how to convey the impact of his impressions.

HANS HUTH  
The Art Institute of Chicago

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Meyer Schapiro, *Vincent van Gogh* (Library of Great Painters Series), New York, Abrams, 1950. 130 pp., 20 black-and-white illus. + 50 color plates. \$10.

Jean Leymarie, *Van Gogh*, Paris, Editions Pierre Tisné, 1951. 162 pp., 160 plates.

These two new books indicate beyond any doubt that there is an increasing interest in van Gogh and seem to presage a greater recognition of his artistic accomplishment and its importance for the twentieth century. Although obviously meant to appeal to everyone as handsome picture books (which they are), they are much more than that, containing as they do excellent criticism and valuable information.

The text or Meyer Schapiro's book is a critical essay, which in a very personal way expounds some fascinating ideas about van Gogh's life and work. It is written with great understanding, respect and admiration and has already exerted some influence on other critics. In addition to the text, which is illustrated with twenty black-and-white reproductions of drawings, there are fifty very good color plates of the paintings with rather extensive comments on each. To judge from the format, it was the intention of the author (or more probably the publisher, since it is true of this series of books) to devote the text to the artist and to reserve more specific remarks about the individual paintings for the page facing each reproduction. People like to read something relevant to each painting as they look at it and should appreciate this arrangement. One possible disadvantage is that they may read the comments but not the text; more references back to the text might perhaps have eliminated this possibility. Those who do read both may feel that the division of the material is not entirely successful, and that it occasionally seems somewhat forced into place. Whatever their objections may be, there can be no doubt that the author has made a valuable contribution.

Jean Leymarie has written a different kind of book. It was intended as a general introduction to van Gogh's work, to be used by the public and students. The author has availed himself of recent work and criticism (Meyer Schapiro is quoted occasionally, but Leymarie's text is biographical and factual rather than critical) and has produced an extremely useful work. The fact that this is the case in spite of a few factual errors (e.g., one on page 35 to the effect that Toulouse-Lautrec died in 1911 instead of 1901) makes the book even more unusual. One hundred sixty paintings are reproduced, many of them in color. The color reproductions are rather anemic and do not compare favorably with those in Schapiro's book. In the back there are notes on the plates, which include quotations from Vincent's letters referring to the paintings. In addition to these quotations, a number of complete letters forms another sec-

tion. A thorough chronology, reproductions of the work of Israels, Mauve, Rappard and Millet, a bibliography, a list of exhibitions of van Gogh's work from 1887 to 1951, photographs of him and a selection of the first critical articles written about him by Gauguin, Albert Aurier and others further contribute to making this an outstanding book.

PATRICK T. MALONE  
The Art Institute of Chicago

*The Dada Painters and Poets*, edited by Robert Motherwell (*Documents of Modern Art*, Vol. 8), New York, Wittenborn, Schultz, 1951. xxxii + 388 pp., 147 illus. \$15.

This book offers a remarkable collection of literary and artistic documents pertaining to the Dada movement which developed during the years 1916-21 in Europe and in America. No definitive history of that movement has yet been written, and this volume undoubtedly constitutes at the present moment the best available introduction to a study of its complexities and aims. The reader will find conveniently assembled here not only the famous fundamental Dadaist texts, but also many highly significant and little-known testimonies about Dada's origin, character and growth. Numerous well-chosen illustrations contribute greatly to convey a vivid idea of the manifold aspects of this puzzling phase of contemporary art. This *summa* on Dadaism is presented with complete impartiality. It shows a deep knowledge and intelligent understanding of the whole movement on the part of the editor.

He has wisely refrained from trying to suggest a logical pattern of interpretation of Dadaism. While the cubist writers and artists, who preceded Dada, and also the surrealists, who came after it, set for themselves sharp, trenchant programs and in general followed well-defined courses, the Dadaists rejected every program and wandered in many directions at once, more often than not beyond the field of intelligibility. Dada has been variously explained by critics either as an expression of despair from a sacrificed generation, or as a particularly violent explosion of the perennial spirit of youth's revolt, or as a tragic evidence of the incipient disintegration of spiritual values in our modern world, or again as a colossal practical joke played on naive *bons bourgeois* by publicity-seeking bohemians. Each of these explanations certainly contains an element of truth. But in fact all those elements combined towards the end of the first World War to provoke in widely separated yet strangely similar artistic and literary groups in New York, Zurich and Paris an outburst of virulent attacks against society, of iconoclastic statements, riotous meetings and deliberately absurd or obscene productions which aroused dismay, disgust, exasperation and scorn in the general public. Then, suddenly and without apparent cause, this shattering tornado of univer-

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sal vilification died down; but the path it had followed was strewn with ruins.

The destructive action of Dada is well known. Yet one of the outstanding merits of the present book is to reveal a number of clear, constructive undercurrents raising powerfully under the whirling surface of this turbid maelstrom. The documents presented by Robert Motherwell conclusively show in many Dadaists a desperate longing for new spiritual values, a search for a higher "something else" above their sordid environment and an almost heroic courage in their challenge to the accepted conventional beliefs. Thus the Dada movement appears as infinitely richer and more complex than has hitherto been generally assumed. Certain of its facets are probably still to be uncovered, but its essential features now stand out clearly in the light of this new and in every respect excellent piece of work.

GEORGES LEMAITRE  
Stanford University

**Alice Ford, Edward Hicks, Painter of the Peaceable Kingdom. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1952. xvi + 161 pp., 37 illus. \$8.50.**

Edward Hicks is probably the best known among American "primitive" painters of the early nineteenth century. His favorite composition, the *Peaceable Kingdom*—of which he is now believed to have painted about one hundred somewhat different versions—translates Isaiah's famous prophecy into an arresting image. His other paintings likewise reveal a remarkable gift for suggestive spatial and plastic organization. Yet this untutored Quaker minister and coach-painter had little confidence in the value of painting as an art or in his own inventive powers. He rarely ventured beyond the copying of prints and engravings, though he knew how to change the commonplace into the imaginative.

Hicks left a detailed autobiography and copious files of correspondence. Miss Ford's new book is the result of extensive research, utilizing

unpublished documents generously made accessible to her by the painter's descendants. She has also gathered valuable information about Edward Hicks's paintings, signs, fireboards and so forth and has unearthed source material on which he drew for his inspiration. The book is handsomely produced, with ample illustrations and a useful bibliography (to which should be added Louisa Dresser's sensitive, though brief, discussion in the *Worcester Art Museum Bulletin* (Spring, 1934)).

Unfortunately, however, no really clear picture either of the man or of the artist emerges from Miss Ford's study. It is overloaded with unessential detail, forcing the reader to wade through page after page of minutiae—travel accounts, long personal and family letters quoted in full, even recipes for cakes. Her writing also is cumbersome and often repetitious. The author's frequently expressed criticism of Hicks's ideas indicates a lack of understanding for his essentially mystic approach to religion and life. Equally regrettable in a book of this scope is the failure to provide a careful analysis of the elements of Hicks's pictorial expression, and their development from an early tenseness to a much more mellow and open form.

Thus the present volume, welcome as it is, leaves too many questions unanswered to be considered the "definitive" life of this self-taught artist.

WALTER L. NATHAN  
Bradford Junior College

**Hermann Weyl, Symmetry, Princeton, Princeton University, 1952. vi + 168 pp., incl. 72 illus. \$3.75.**

To say simply even a very small portion of what might properly be said about this profound little book by a very great mathematician would require many pages with at least two headaches on each page. In the short space available, it is necessary to be elliptical and to remember that all values are relative.

In the technical journals of the author's calling, these four lectures are certain to receive

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laudatory full-dress reviews. In the columns of an art magazine, however, all that is needed is to enter a short plea of confession and avoidance—which is the way the lawyers most respectfully say “So what?”

Addressing himself to philosophical scientists who are vitally interested in the structure of space and the difference between left and right, the author quite reasonably uses a little art for his own purposes, just as did the old lady whose door-stop was a volume of Goethe's poems, of which she read not a word but knew that it weighed five pounds.

The word “symmetry” is a homonym, i.e., two quite different words that happen to be spelled and pronounced in the same way. The “symmetry” of the author and the “symmetry” of common speech have meanings so different that either, from the point of view of the other, is what Euclid used to call “absurd.” The “symmetry” of the author can only be approached and excavated with bulldozers supplied by the group-theory branch of higher mathematics. Group-theory analysis much resembles the study of the smile of the Cheshire cat, for it is confined to the abstract “structure” of what is left after the cat of sensuous acquaintance has vanished. It is, therefore, not mysterious that men were able to make and enjoy the repeat patterns of decorative art (that is, the cat) for more than four thousand years before mathematicians discovered how to analyze its “automorphisms” (that is, the smiles that remain after pussy has evaporated).

The necessary implications of all this for artists, designers and lovers of art are obvious.

For anyone not in active training for physico-mathematico-philosophizing, the reading, let alone the mastering, of this book is a vanity that can only be forgiven as an act of supererogation. The Oxford Dictionary defines that as “the performance of good works beyond what God commands or requires.”

W. M. IVINS JR  
Woodbury, Conn.

Ralph Dutton, *The Age of Wren*, London, Batsford (distributed by British Book Centre, New York), 1951. 136 pp. + 137 black-and-white + 1 color plate. \$9.

This is one of the same series with Sitwell's *British Architects and Craftsmen* and Lees-Milne's *Age of Adam*. It is concerned not only with Wren (of whom, since the publications of the Wren Society, all is known, and here well summarized), but also with his age, by its introduction and the chapters “The Lesser Company” (Pratt, May, Hooke, Jarman, Archer, Talman, James, Wynne, etc.) and “The Baroque School” (Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor, Gibbs). It gives considerable space to French influence on Wren and others, but wholly overlooks Italian baroque influence on him, as developed in my paper on “Wren: Some of his Sources” in the *Architectural Review*, London, for 1924. This showed the source of the Wren spires in works of Bernini and Borromini, such as those of St. Peter's, Sant'Agnese in Piazza Navona, and Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, and of many other features in their works readily accessible at the time through engravings.

One of the most interesting points in Dutton's book is the emphasis given to alleged French influence or even authorship in the second Montagu House, after the first—itsself “built after the French pavilion-way”—burned January 19th, 1685/6, as well as at Boughton (also for Lord Montagu) and at Petworth (1686, for the Duke of Somerset). It is well known that Colin Campbell said in 1714 of Montagu House: “The Architecture was conducted by Monsieur Pouget.” This was repeated by Horace Walpole. Mariette asks in his notes on Walpole if this Pouget can be other than Pierre Puget (1622-94). I know of no document which establishes or contradicts this (no one seems to have looked in the Montagu documents). We have no knowledge that Puget ever came to England, and he could scarcely have “given the design” to Montagu, Ambassador in Paris from 1676 to 1678, where Puget first came for some months from the south in 1688, only.

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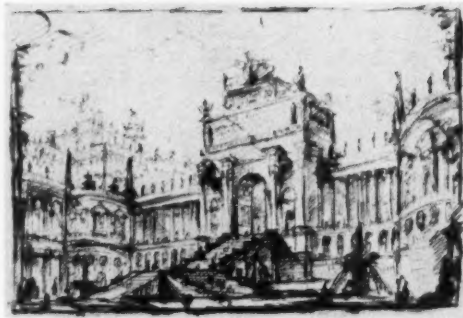


But why so easily give up the name of Pouget, even if Campbell does wrongly give the date of 1678 for Montagu House? A Sébastien Pouget was *concierge* of the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs in Paris from 1668 to 1684. Montagu became Ambassador in 1676 and was relieved July 12th, 1678. Now actually there was nothing about Montagu House that anyone familiar, like Montagu himself, with French architecture could not have dictated readily: the plan is a simple rectangle, with *cour d'honneur*, *corps de logis* in two files of rectangular rooms and three pavilions front and rear with a central square dome and mansard roofs. Even a royal *concierge* could have "conducted" it, especially one who seems, after disappearing from the royal accounts in 1685-88, to have held the post of *Contrôleur de la Maison du Roi* in 1689.

Dutton speaks of Boughton as "suave and accomplished," but its new north front is very standard, and so is that of the new stable block. The system of the front derives from Le Vau's garden front of Versailles, as it existed, with square-headed windows, briefly, just up to the end of his ambassadorship. The mansard roofs, as at Boughton, existed at Versailles on the entrance front. The stables have *chainages*, somewhat rare in England, but existing in many designs of Wren and also, for instance, at Marlborough House, possibly from a design of Wren. There is no reason why any of these could not have been done by anyone who, like Wren, coming from Paris in 1665, had brought back "all France on paper." Dutton's sharpest observation is as regards Wren's use of brick with stone trim, which has often been attributed to Dutch influence. He observes, however, that the Versailles of that time was so treated, and clearly influenced Wren's domestic style.

Perhaps the most interesting among "The Lesser Company" was Thomas Archer, to whom the author gives five illustrations, and to whom a fuller study might profitably be devoted. And very much more is to be said of the baroque in England, even aside from Wren's itself.

FISKE KIMBALL  
Philadelphia Museum of Art



G. B. Piranesi, *Architectural Fantasy*, pen sketch, from A. Hyatt Mayor, *Giovanni Battista Piranesi*

## Latest Books Received

- ART TREASURES OF THE METROPOLITAN (Library of Great Museums Series), New York, Abrams, 1952. 240 pp. + 130 color plates. \$12.50.
- BYZANTINE MOSAICS, introduction by Peter Meyer, New York, Oxford University, 1952. 13 pp. + 14 color plates. \$6.50.
- Graves, Maitland, *COLOR FUNDAMENTALS*, WITH 100 COLOR SCHEMES, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1952. 206 pp. \$10.
- Helm, MacKinley, *SPRING IN SPAIN*, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1952. vii + 315 pp., 4 plates. \$5.
- Ittelson, William H., *THE AMES DEMONSTRATIONS IN PERCEPTION*, Princeton, Princeton University, 1952. xvi + 85 pp., 82 illus. \$4.
- Larwood, Jacob, and John Camden Hotten, with chapter by Gerald Millar, *ENGLISH INN SIGNS*, London, Chatto and Windus (distributed by British Book Centre), 1951. xv + 336 pp. + 80 plates. \$9.
- Mayor, A. Hyatt, *GIOVANNI BATTISTA PIRANESI*, New York, Bittner, 1952. 41 pp. + 138 plates. \$12.
- PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, THE SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION, with essays by Erle Loran, Weldon Kees, and Ernest Mundt, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California, 1952. 16 pp. + 96 plates. \$3.50.
- Seton, Marie, *SERGEI M. EISENSTEIN, A BIOGRAPHY*, foreword by Brooks Atkinson, New York, Wyn, 1952. 533 pp., illus. \$8.50.
- Wren, Denise K., and Rosemary Wren, *POTTERY MAKING*, London, Pitman (distributed by British Book Centre), 1952. 133 pp., 65 illus. \$3.50.

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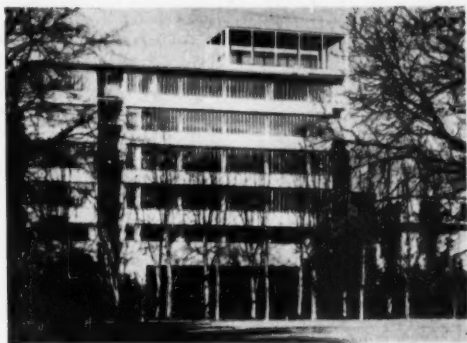
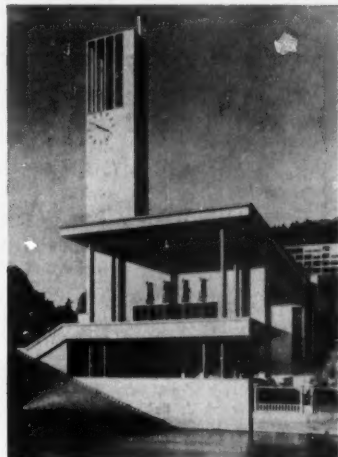
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